CALDERÓN'S 'ARTE NUEVO' IN THE FIRST ACT OF EL MÉDICO DE SU HONRA

John Clifford

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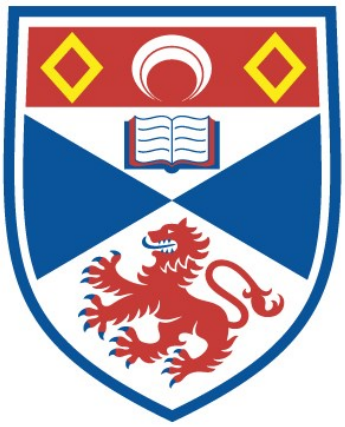

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EL MÉDICO DE SU HONRA

by

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A thesis submitted for the degree of M.Phil.

in the Department of Spanish, University of St. Andrews, April 1982.

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El Medico de su Honra is one of Calderón's most controversial plays. Criticism in the past has largely concentrated on its imagery, its treatment of the honour theme, its portrayal of the King and its relationship to wider theories of tragedy. But very little work has been done on the play as a piece of theatre; and this work is a preliminary attempt to redress the balance.

Calderón was a working dramatist, one skilled and successful in his craft, writing plays that could be successfully staged, and so writing with the resources of his actors, the reactions and expectations of his audience very much in mind. This, too, is the basis of my approach. The complexity of the subject has led me to focus in my enquiries on the first act of the play; but even so, the extraordinary richness of Calderón's dramatic gifts has meant that much has had to be left unsaid.

The study begins with an examination of the way a play should begin. To get a play started is not as simple as it might appear; certain technical problems have to be solved, and the way in which the dramatist tackles them can give useful clues as to what he is trying to express. The opening scenes of this play - Enrique's fall from his horse, Mencía's dismay at his re-appearance in her life, Leonor's reception in audience with the King - on the one hand are simply devices for securing the audience's sympathy and attention, and for supplying the necessary information for comprehension of the play's plot. So they are studied as such; but at the same time they are considered as the means used by Calderón to examine issues such as the status of women, the dispensation of justice in ways that are relevant both to his time and to our own. By the end of the act it has become very clear that the methods used by Calderón to meet the elementary needs of his craft are also the ways that lead to the creation of a profound work of art.

I declare that this thesis has been composed by me and that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a higher degree. I was admitted as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. under General Ordinance No. 12 in October 1973.

Candidate .....

I certify that the conditions of the Ordinance and Regulations relating to the degree of M.Phil. have been filled.

Supervisor .....

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This work could never have been completed without the help of a great many friends. In particular I would like to thank Don Cruickshank, who gave me much encouragement and many references in the early stages; John Gibb, who first introduced me to the play; Rebecca and Susie Innes, for all their support and good advice; Robert Livingston and the members of Merlindene Productions, for all that they taught me about the workings of the theatre; Catherine McCallum, for her conscientiousness and painstaking care; and Professor 'Ferdy' Woodward, who was a constant source of quiet understanding and support.

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INTRODUCTION

On 10th June 1635, a play called El médico de su honra was given a private performance for the King and Queen. The performance was given by Antonio de Prado and his company, and he was paid for it on the 26th of August.(1)

We do not know for sure whether the play in question was Calderón's, or the play of the same title ascribed to Lope de Vega.(2) It seems likely it was Calderón's. Generally, the plays given a private royal performance in the palace were plays that had been successful in the corrales, or had in some way aroused the King's interest. Beyond that, we have no knowledge of exactly how well the play was received by its first audiences. Calderón must have felt a certain pride in it, for he had it included in the Segunda Parte of his plays, first printed in 1637.(3)

Nowadays, at least, it comes across as a play of extraordinary power. One can guess that it made quite an impact then, too, for Calderón includes a reference to it in his much later play Dar tiempo al tiempo.(4) Interestingly enough, the reference is a mocking one.

It occurs at the beginning of the second act. The first act has been fraught with the amorous complications of don Pedro, the lover of don Diego's sister. The lady in question has eluded them both; don Pedro is afflicted with jealousy, don Diego with concern for his honour. They unexpectedly bump into each other; both are suffering from feelings of which they feel ashamed, and so they make elaborate attempts to conceal the real source of their anxieties. Diego is the first to offer an explanation:

DIEGO a mi hermana...

PEDRO (AP.) ¡Ay de mí! ¿Qué irá a decir?

DIEGO ...la ha dado esta noche tal
accidente, que mortal
ha estado, y por acudir
a su remedio, he salido
a buscarla yo el dotor
de más fama; que el amor
con que siempre la he querido
no me permitió a un criado
fiar esta diligencia... (5)

His words are an obvious echo of Gutierre's famous excuse for the death of his wife,(6) and don Pedro's guilty conscience immediately makes him fear the worst:

PEDRO (AP.) Decir que está mortal
y que anda a buscar remedios
todo es honestar los medios
de su muerte. ¿Qué haré en tal
confusión para librarla?

The extraordinary complications of the play's delightful plot are far too involved to explain here; the point is that what in El médico de su honra is a frightening and horrifying scene has here become a source of amusement, a silly attempt to avoid social embarrassment.

Leaving aside the internal evidence of the plays themselves, such a scene indicates that both Calderón and his audience alike held a much more sophisticated and detached view of the vexed question of honour than has generally been supposed. Certainly contemporary opponents of the theatre gave Calderón and his fellow playwrights no credit for sophistication. They mounted virulent attacks on the bloodthirsty endings of plays such as El médico de su honra, and on the cruelty of the code of values that inspired them. Implicit in such attacks, of course, is the idea that the dramatists themselves were whole-heartedly in favour of wife-murder, even on the flimsiest

of evidence, and wished to encourage their audience to adopt a similarly sanguinary marital attitude. P. Agustín de Herrera, for example, without mentioning any names, fiercely attacked the values of honour, which he called

> "este ídolo de la venganza, con el nombre de punto de honra y de duelo, se adora en las comedias." (7)

In a way, he had a point. Affairs of honour were undoubtedly good box-office material. There is also something most distasteful about the frequency with which dramatists of the time capitalised on the audience's thirst for blood - particularly, it sometimes seems, the blood of women. It does, however, seem a little inconsistent of him and his colleagues simultaneously to attack the plays for encouraging wives to be unfaithful to their husbands. Bances Candamo, a defender of the theatre in general, and an ardent disciple of Calderón in particular, has some interesting statements to make that cast some light on the acceptability of such bloodthirsty scenes.

Writing 8 years after Calderón's death, Bances Candamo emphasises that it is vitally important for the dramatist to avoid giving offence:

> "El maior cuidado del Poeta, y otro precepto de la cómica, es no escoger casos horrorosos ni de mal exemplar, y el Patio tampoco los sufre" (8)

He gives two examples of two such "casos horrorosos"; one is the famous scene in Calderón's Las tres justicias en una in which a young man strikes his supposed father.(9) The other example is more relevant to our present concerns:

> "A Don Francisco de Rojas le siluaron la comedia de Cada qual lo que le toca, por hauerse atreuido a poner en ella vn caballero que, casándose, halló violada de otro Amor a su esposa." (10)

If Bances Candamo is correct, it is a curious reflection of 17th century taste that Spanish theatre-goers should find it perfectly acceptable to watch a husband murdering his innocent wife on the merest suspicion of adultery, but should noisily protest because a husband accepts the fact that his wife has already lost her virginity.

One must assume that it was the male section of the audience that found such killings acceptable; one wonders how the women in the cazuela reacted in the light of contemporary reports such as these:

> "Ya sabrá V.R. como en Jaén mató un escribano a su mujer con menos causa; levantóse el género femenino de manera que para sosegarle fue menester con presteza ahorcar al malhechor..." (11)

If the authorities had to hastily hang a wife-murderer to save him, and themselves, from the fury of a female lynch mob, how, one cannot help wondering, would the cazuela respond to the actions of a don Gutierre or a don Juan Roca? Bances Candamo suggests that such killings in the comedia were designed to cow the women in the audience:

> "Ninguna comedia ai entre todas las castellanas que acabe en vn adulterio, aunque ai algunas que empiezan en él y acaban en la tragedia de la venganza, porque es regla también indispensable que no se pueda poner el delito sin el castigo de él, por no dar mal exemplo, y esto más es poner horror al adulterio que incitarle." (12)

As an example to prove his point, he cites the plot of Calderón's "primorosa comedia" El Pintor de su deshonra:

> "hace que el galán robe a una mujer casada, sin culpa de la infeliz, y se mantiene intacta en poder de el galán y, no obstante, por la duda, mata a los dos el marido." (13)

Such a plot, as far as he is concerned, completely refutes the charge that the theatre encouraged marital infidelity.(14) On the contrary, he argues, Calderón's play is the sternest warning imaginable against erring wives:

> "todo el discurso de la comedia puede ser escuela de los buenos casados, y el fin terror de los malos." (15)

Were we to apply such standards to El médico de su honra, we could find in it an even sterner warning against marital unfaithfulness. The unfortunate Mencía is not even abducted: the Prince only talks to her once. This happens against her will in her husband's absence. Yet he still kills her "por la duda".

This is the point that Hartzenbuch took to be the moral of the play - an exemplary play to frighten erring wives. Presumably he stressed this when he "improved" the play in his four act version of it.(16)

But it is very hard to take such an interpretation seriously. For one thing, Mencía's punishment is so appallingly disproportionate to her crime - even assuming she commits one. For another, the play seems to break Bances Candamo's "regla indispensable" that a crime should never go unpunished - "por no dar mal exemplo"(17) since Enrique quite wilfully attempts to commit the crime of adultery, and not only escapes unpunished but, as Calderón takes care to remind us,(18) eventually becomes King.

Menéndez y Pelayo was the first to note some of these disturbing features and violently attacked the play on their account. He termed Gutierre

> "la encarnación la más completa del sentimiento del honor en lo que tiene de irracional y falso." (19)

and concluded that the play, like its companion pieces El pintor de su deshonra and A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, for all the beauties of their construction, were basically only fit to be studied as curious examples of a freakish historical phenomenon:

> "estos tres dramas, aparte que en su estructura son de lo mejor que el poeta hizo, merecen, sobre todo, estudiarse en título de fenómeno moral o inmoral de aberración histórica singularísima." (20)

Menéndez y Pelayo set a fashion that was followed by the generation of "98" and their successors, who took the play to represent all that was backward and barbarous in Spain's reactionary past. Pérez de Ayala parodied it in his novel Tigre Juan and its sequel El curandero de su honra (21) and Valle-Inclán savagely attacked the play in his esperpento Los cuernos de don Friolera. (22) Such a view of Calderón still tends to be fairly prevalent among Spaniards, and the information that one is studying El médico de su honra is often received with varying degrees of polite, and sometimes not so polite, astonishment and disbelief.

If only Calderón had been a little more liberal, his play might have been more acceptable. He only needed to change the ending. Imagine for a minute a play in which Gutierre began to entertain suspicions of his wife's past and present infidelity. He struggles vainly with his jealous suspicions, and is just about to kill her when,

at the very last minute, the King intervenes and makes him realise that to murder Mencía would be a ghastly mistake. Gutierre is reassured about the present, forgives the past, and the happy pair are joyously reconciled.

The absurdity of such a scenario is only too apparent. It is not a play Calderón ever wrote, or ever could have written. At least part of the reason why not has to do with the kind of values, standards and dramatic conventions of his time. The more interesting question then emerges as to the extent to which Calderón's output was adversely affected by such limitations.

The question is beautifully put by A.A. Parker in his characteristically perceptive consideration of the role of the graciosos in El mágico prodigioso:

> "The point at issue...is...are we to explain this comic relief as merely the practical necessity of playing down to the audience, or can we detect in it a real dramatic function? Was Calderón's art determined by conventions of this kind or could it impose itself upon and through them?" (23)

Parker answers his own questions in the affirmative; Calderón, he concludes

> "did not allow the conventions he followed to dim his intelligence or lessen his integrity as an artist; instead he fused them into his art by giving them a dramatic function within the exposition of his themes." (24)

It is hardly necessary to state that similar conclusions have been generally accepted about El médico de su honra, and that its rehabilitation has now progressed to the point where it has become accepted as one of Calderón's greatest plays.

The task of tracing this process through the vast mass of critical studies inspired by the question of honour in general, and this play in particular, is quite beyond the scope of this present study. Suffice it to say that honour has been studied as a historical phenomenon,(25) an anthropological problem,(26) and a literary convention.(27) Attempts have also been made to try to determine the extent to which the "pundonor" portrayed in the drama reflected values actually held in real life.(28)

Calderón's own attitude to the so-called honour-code has been established as being far more critical than has often been assumed,(29) and this critical attitude has been amply shown to find a powerful expression in this play.(30) Gutierre's character has been studied from various angles, including the psychological,(31) and the King has been a particular focus of lively controversy.(32) Attention has been drawn to the function of the play's imagery(33) and to its overpowering sense of sadness and oppression.(34)

Many of these studies are extraordinarily valuable; most, if not all, follow what R.D.F.Pring-Mill has so aptly termed

> "la manera moderna de enfocar a Calderón como un dramaturgo moralista y pensador, el cual nos presenta... un sistema de principios universales cuya operación - y cuya interacción - se estudian en situaciones particulares y humanos, cuidadosa y metódicamente establecidas dentro del pequeño mundo de acción de cada pieza." (35)

This particular aspect of Calderón's art has been so well established, and so skilfully investigated, that I do not intend to explore it further. I would not, for instance, wish to investigate how the play works as tragedy.(36) Neither am I especially concerned with the problem of the King, nor even with its imagery or its themes.

I do not wish to think about it as a piece of constitutional or theological controversy, or even as a piece of poetry.(37)

The proliferation of such studies reflects the way in which criticism of Calderón tends to concentrate on the literary rather than the dramatic aspects of his work. This is hardly surprising given that most students of Calderón approach him through the printed text and remain in total ignorance of his work in performance. My intention has been to attempt to overcome such ignorance and to concentrate on the play as a piece of theatre.(38)

An invaluable source of information has been Shergold's History of the Spanish Stage;(39) a useful source of inspiration has been Sloman's The Dramatic Craftsmanship of Calderón.(40) For my concern has not been with Calderón the towering intellectual, or Calderón the powerful tragedian, but with Calderón the working playwright. As such, he had certain very practical, down to earth problems to solve. I want to consider his solutions to some of them; from there, I wish to try to assess the play's impact as a piece of theatre. By that, I do not mean its impact as read, studied and meditated upon in private from the pages of a book; I mean its impact as seen, felt, and reacted to in public on the stage of a theatre.

It is worth noting, I think, that the impetus to conclude this study arose from an attempt to produce the play in English on the modern stage; and that in the course of much of its writing I was also engaged in writing reviews of plays in performance. Both these tasks have helped shape what I have written.

The result, I hope, will draw attention to a different aspect of Calderón's art. It is not so structurally elegant or intellectually satisfying as some traditional accounts of Calderón's work, but I hope

it is a truer reflection of theatrical experience. For going to the theatre is not simply an intellectual exercise; all kinds of emotional, intuitive, and sometimes quite irrational responses are involved. Somehow we must expand our critical practice to take these into account.

For Calderón's intellectual stature is surely beyond dispute; what tends to be neglected is his ability to work on an audience's emotions and intuitions. It is only a beginning, a tentative, incomplete and imperfect one. The extraordinary richness and diversity of the text has forced me to concentrate on the play's beginning. By any account, the first act of El médico de su honra is an astonishing achievement. I have hardly begun to do justice to it. Much still needs to be done.

But what hampers us most of all is our abysmal lack of experience of Calderón in performance. We sometimes resemble a bunch of tone-deaf musicologists trying to reconstruct a symphony solely on the basis of its score. The most important thing is to bring Calderón back to the theatre, and watch him at work in the medium of which he was a master. Then our discoveries will truly begin.

NOTES

(1) See N.D. Shergold & J.E. Varey, 'Some Early Calderón Dates', BHS 38 (1961), p. 281.

(2) This may be the play performed in the palace on 8th October 1628/9. It was published in Lope's Parte veintisiete de comedias in Barcelona in 1633. That edition states the play was first performed by Avendaño. Shergold has noted a certain similarity between the cast structure of Calderón's El médico de su honra and La vida es sueño which has led him to speculate that both plays may have been especially written for Prado's company. See his 'La vida es sueño: ses acteurs, son théâtre et son public' in J. Jacquot (ed.), Dramaturgie et société, vol. I (Paris 1968), p. 104, n. 30.

(3) As is by now well known, there were three editions of this parte: the first, in 1637, by María de Quiñones (QC), a second in 1641 by Carlos Sánchez (S), and a third, a fake of unknown date, attributed to María de Quiñones (Q). See D.W. Cruickshank, 'The textual criticism of Calderon's comedias: a survey' in The Comedias of Calderon, vol. I p. 4. A more detailed analysis of the relationship between QC, S and Q, with reference to A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, can be found in E.M. Wilson, 'Notes on the text of A secreto agravio, secreta venganza in pp. 95-106 of the same volume, reprinted from BHS 35 (1958), pp. 72-82.

(4) This highly amusing, and oddly neglected play was first printed in the Parte diecisiete de comedias nuevas escogidas of 1652; it can be found in Obras completas de Calderón, ed. A. Valbuena Briones, vol. II, Comedias (Madrid 1960), pp. 1333-1370.

(5) Ed. cit. p. 1346a.

(6) Ed. C.A. Jones (Oxford 1976), III: 773ss.

(7) See Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, Bibliografía de las controversias sobre la licitud del teatro en España (Madrid 1904), p. 356. Cf. in the same volume, the comments of the anonymous author of Diálogos de las comedias (1620), p. 213; and J.C.J. Metford, 'The Enemies of the Theatre in the Golden Age', BHS 28 (1951), pp. 76-92.

(8) Francisco Bances Candamo, Theatro de los theatros de los passados y presentes siglos, ed. Duncan W. Moir (London 1970), p. 35.

(9) Ed. cit. p. 35. Bances Candamo confuses this play with Calderón's De un castigo, tres venganzas. See Moir's introduction, p. 88.

(10) Ed. cit. p. 35.

(11) Cartas de algunos padres de la Compañía de Jesús, quoted by Malveena McKendrick, Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age (London 1974), p. 39.

(12) McKendrick p. 34.

(13) McKendrick p. 34.

(14) This is one of the oldest and most frequently repeated of all the charges levelled against the theatre by its opponents. See, for example, Garcia de Loaisa y Girón (1598): "En el teatro se aprende el adulterio, las trazas y marañas y cautelas con que han de engañar al marido..." in Cotarelo, p. 393.

(15) Ed. cit., p. 34.

(16) See J.E. Hartzenbusch, 'Notas y observaciones' to Comedias de don Pedro Calderón de la Barca, IV (Madrid 1850), p. 695-6. El médico de su honra did in fact enjoy a modest revival in the 19th century; see Nicholas B. Adams, 'Siglo de oro plays in Madrid, 1820-50', HR 4 (1936) pp. 342-57.

(17) Ed. cit. p. 34.

(18) He inserts snatches of a couple of romances, perhaps of his own composition, that refer to Pedro's impending death (see III:482ss and III:586ss); and also, of course, has Enrique accidentally cut his brother's hand in a way that prefigures the King's murder (III:218ss).

(19) In the introduction to his edition of Teatro selecto de Calderón de la Barca (Madrid 1887), reprinted in Estudios y discursos de crítica histórica y literaria, vol. III of the Edición Nacional of his Obras completas (Madrid, 1941), p. 346.

(20) Calderón y su teatro, ed. cit., p. 252.

(21) Both originally published in Madrid in 1926.

(22) First published in 1921; reprinted in 1930 with other esperpento under the title Martes de Carnaval.

(23) 'The role of the graciosos in El mágico prodigioso' in Hans Flasche (ed.), Litterae Hispanae et Lusitanae (Munich 1968), p. 318.

(24) Art. cit. p. 330.

(25) The most stimulating historical perspective on the question is Américo Castro's. See his De la edad conflictiva (Madrid 1961). See also A.A. von Beysterveldt, Répercussions du souci de la pureté de sang sur la conception de l'honneur dans la 'comedia nueva' espagnole (Leiden, 1966); and A.A. Sicroff, Les controverse des statuts de 'pureté de sang' en Espagne du XVème au XVIIème siècle (Paris, 1960). For a most intelligent article on El médico de su honra in the context of such theories see D.W. Cruickshank, 'The Metaphorical Crypto-judaism of Calderón's Gutierre', BHS 59 (1982), pp. 33-41.

(26) See Julian Pitt-Rivers, 'Honour and Social Status' in J.G. Peristiany (ed.), Honour and Shame: the Values of a Mediterranean Society (Chicago, 1966), pp 19-77.

(27) See, among many many others: Américo Castro, 'Algunas observaciones acerca del concepto del honor en los siglos XVI y XVII', RFE 3 (1916), pp 1-50,357-86; W.J. Entwhistle, 'Honra y duelo', RJ 3 (1950), pp 404-20; Gustavo Correa, 'El doble aspecto de la honra en el teatro del siglo XVII', HR 26 (1958), pp. 99-107.

(28) See C.A. Jones, 'Honour in Spanish Golden Age Drama: its Relation to Real Life and Morals', BHS 36 (1958), pp.199-210; and his 'Spanish Honour as Historical Phenomenon, Convention and Artistic Motive', HR 33 (1965), pp. 32-9.

(29) See E.M. Wilson, 'Gerald Brenan's Calderón', BCom 4 (1952); Peter N. Dunn, 'Honour and the Christian Background in Calderón', BHS 38 (1960), pp. 75-105. Edwin Honig has produced a series of articles on the subject, among them 'The Seizures of Honour in Calderón', Kenyon Review 23 (1961), pp. 426-47; 'The Concept of Honour in the Dramas of Calderón', New Mexico Quarterly 35 (1965), pp. 105-17; 'Calderón's Secret Vengeance: Dehumanising Honour' in Homenaje a William L. Fichter (Madrid, 1971), pp. 295-306.

(30) See D.W. Cruickshank, '"Pongo mi mano en sangre bañada a la puerta": Adultery in El médico de su honra', Studies... Presented to E.M. Wilson, London, 1973, pp. 45-62.

(31) See E.W. Hesse, 'Gutierre's personality in El médico de su honra', BCom 28 (1976), pp. 11-16; and his 'A Psychological Approach to El médico de su honra', RJ 18 (1977), pp. 326-40.

(32) See A.I. Watson, 'Peter the Cruel or Peter the Just?', RJ 14 (1963), pp. 322-46; D.W. Cruickshank, 'Calderón's King Pedro: Just or Unjust?', Spanische Forschungen 25 (1970), pp 113-32; Frank P. Casa, 'Crime and Responsability in El médico de su

honra, in Homenaje a William L. Fichter (Madrid, 1971), pp. 122-37; Lloyd King, 'The Role of King Pedro in Calderón's El médico de su honra', BCom 23 (1971), pp. 44-9; T.A. O'Connor, 'The Interplay of Prudence and Imprudence in El médico de su honra', RJ 24 (1973), pp. 303-22; I. Benabu, 'On King Pedro's Predicament at the End of El médico de su honra', BHS 59 (1982), pp. 26-32.

(33) Notably by A.A. Parker, 'Metáfora y símbolo en la interpretación de Calderón' in Actas del primer congreso internacional de hispanistas (Oxford, 1964), pp. 141-60; Daniel Rogers, '"Tienen los celos pasos de ladrones": Silence in Calderón's El médico de su honra', HR 33 (1965), pp. 273-89.

(34) See Hans-Jorg Neuschäfer, 'El triste drama de honor: formas de crítica ideológica en el teatro de honor de Calderón' in Hacia Calderón. Segundo coloquio anglo-germano (Berlin, 1973), pp. 89-109; Gwynne Edwards, The Prison and the Labyrinth (Cardiff, 1978).

(35) See R.D.F. Pring-Mill, 'Los calderonistas de habla inglesa y La vida es sueño: métodos de análisis temático-estructural' in Hans Flasche (ed.), Litterae Hispanae et Lusitanae (Munich, 1968) p. 375.

(36) This has been admirably studied by A.A. Parker in 'El médico de su honra as Tragedy', Hispanófila, Número especial dedicado a la comedia, I (1974), pp. 3-23, using the general principles expounded in his 'Towards a Definition of Calderonian Tragedy', BHS 39 (1962) pp. 222-37, and The Approach to the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age, Diamante no. 6 (London 1957). Parker's principles with reference to this play are discussed by R.R. MacCurdy, 'A Critical Review of El médico de su honra as tragedy', BCom 30 (1978), pp. 3-14. A less successful application of general principles to the play is Robert ter Horst, 'From Comedy to Tragedy: Calderón and the New Tragedy', MLN 92 (1977), pp. 181-201.

(37) See B.W. Wardropper, 'Poetry and Drama in Calderón's El médico de su honra', RR 49 (1958), pp. 3-11.

(38) Unfortunately I came accross W.R. Blue, '"¿Qué es esto que miro?" Converging Sign Systems in El médico de su honra, BCom 30 (1978), pp. 83-96, too late to utilise it. The same author has also contributed a useful study of the role of Coquín, 'La cédula de la puerta: el cuento de Coquín', Romance Notes, 20 (1978), pp. 242-7

(39) Oxford, 1967.

(40) Oxford, 1958.

C H A P T E R O N E

"en el primer acto ponga el caso..."

The first question we must try to tackle is the one of how to get the play started. The aspiring dramatist of Calderón's time - and indeed of any time - would do well to turn to Lope for advice. In his Arte nuevo de hacer comedias, he drops a hint as to what the dramatist should try to achieve in his first act:

"En el acto primero ponga el caso..." (1)

This is not as easy as it sounds. As so often, Lope's apparent artlessness conceals a great deal of artifice. "Poner el caso" is by no means as easy or as straightforward as his common-sense advice seems to suppose; many technical difficulties need to be overcome by both dramatist and performer if the play is to have a successful beginning.(2)

The main problem is a matter of communicating various items of indispensable information in a way that both evokes and sustains the spectators' interest. How much information is considered indispensable, and the way in which this information is conveyed, can tell us a great deal about the nature of the dramatist's craft and the view of the world that is being communicated to us.

Let us consider, for example, the opening of Lope's Peribáñez:

"BODA DE VILLANOS. EL CURA; INÉS, MADRINA; COSTANZA, LABRADORA; CASILDA, NOVIA; PERIBÁÑEZ; MÚSICOS, DE LABRADORES." (3)

We must remember that it is not the case of the curtain rising onto a static scene. The stage was bare, and open to the audience.(4) So the characters had to walk onto the stage to get the play started; and it was up to the dramatist to devise a plausible and interesting entrance for them.

In this case, everyone is coming out of a wedding ceremony, and entering the house where the marriage is to be celebrated. All this is conveyed by the characters' costume and grouping. Lope sees to it that a Priest comes on stage; he has Casilda dressed as a bride, and we naturally imagine her to be walking arm in arm with Peribáñez, whom we therefore recognise as the bridegroom. Everyone else is dressed as peasants in their Sunday best; all this, together with the blessings of the relatives (I:1, 2-3) and the lines given to the Priest (I:6-13) simply and effectively underline the fact that a wedding ceremony has just taken place. Besides indicating the occasion, the costumes also indicate the class of the characters, which will play such an important part in the story.(5)

The identity of the actors, too, would probably be well-known to the audience. Given the hierarchical organisation of the theatre companies of the time, the leading actor, or primer galán, would be readily identified as the actor playing Peribáñez, and the leading lady as the actress playing Casilda.(6) So the audience could immediately tell that these two, the peasant bride and groom, were to be the two central characters in the play that is to come. Lope has also given us a clue as to its basic preoccupations - the clash between social classes and the inviolability of marriage.

In fact, Lope has succeeded in conveying a great deal of necessary information in an apparently effortless manner. His basic situation has now been established, as if without trying, and, as Ruano and Varey point out(7) he has probably also succeeded in capturing the attention of his notoriously unruly audience. People are still prepared to wait for hours outside a church door to catch a glimpse of bride and groom; so the opening situation of Lope's play

is one full of interest. Having established his basic situation, Lope can relax, as it were, and take a little time to elaborate on it. The pace is slowed down, and the next hundred or so lines (I:25-119) are largely devoted to long, delightful speeches in which the main characters declare their love for each other, using images derived from the countryside in which they live. Critics have been at pains to underline the thematic importance of such speeches;(8) they also reveal an interesting aspect of Lope's technique.

It is worth noting, for instance, that Lope does not need to convey anything about the characters' past lives. We are simply left to infer a normal and happy courtship between social equals. Indeed, strictly speaking, the speeches are not really needed to further the play's dramatic action. A producer who was desperate to get on with the story could even cut them. Having established an initial dominance over his audience, it is as if Lope could count on a few moments' grace in which he had the leisure to have his characters elaborate on their basic situation.

We can attribute this, at least partly, to the fact that the actors would not be playing to an audience that was wholly unprepared. Actors nowadays have to work on their audience from scratch, as it were, often with little more than the expectation roused by the dimming of the house lights or the raising of the curtain to help them. But the actors in Peribáñez, for instance, even if they lacked the benefit of these technical aids, did at least have the benefit of the loa to help them.(9)

A present day actor who is recording a comedy programme for television enjoys the benefit of playing to an audience that has already been "warmed up" for him by a comedian employed especially

for that purpose. So to a certain extent he can count on his audience's attention and sympathy being already aroused and engaged. This was precisely the function that the loa performed on the stage of 17th century Madrid. In practice, this would make a crucial difference to the "feel" of an audience and to the kind of material that could be aimed at them.

These moments of grace cannot be over-exploited, however. By line 121, Lope must fear he has exhausted his audience's patience. The Cura interrupts the lovers' dialogue, and Lope has Peribáñez himself make a mock apology to his wedding guests, and by extension to the theatre audience, for having spoken so long:

PERIBÁÑEZ Señores,
pues no sois en amor nuevos,
perdón. (I:122-4)

Then Lope recaptures the attention of his audience with a song and a dance - which also, of course, serves to underline the harmony of the newly-wed couple with the natural order - and then, with the off-stage fall of the Comendador, he makes the action proceed. He writes the scene with an art so highly developed as to appear artless. His technique is so skilful it remains invisible. His concern has been to establish a basically simple, and emotionally significant situation - almost an archetype - elaborate on it, and then make the action proceed. The scene is familiar, instantly recognisable. It needs little explanation; the action proceeds from the present moment, without particular reference to the past.

This is a particular style of opening that we often find in Lope's plays. Two lovers meet beside a stream.(10) A young man describes a beautiful girl he has just seen.(11) A young girl tries

to escape from her mother's oppressive tutelage.[12] Two young men who have just returned in triumph from the wars, are persuaded to ride in triumph through the city streets.[13] Again, the situation is easily recognisable, the setting is familiar, either through experience or through story. One has the sense that its staging presented Lope with few technical problems.

The same cannot always be said of Calderón. Although working with the same technical resources as Lope, and working within the same technical limitations - at least when writing for the stage of the public theatres[14] - he often confronts himself with a different set of technical problems. His settings are generally much more exotic, and the opening situations are much less familiar. A woman dressed as a man has been thrown off her horse and wanders, lost, on a desolate mountain. She comes to a dark tower and meets its prisoner, a wild man dressed in skins.[15] A sleeping king dreams of a beautiful woman who rubs out every word that he writes.[16] A furious king, dressed in skins, strides down to the sea shore. He, too, has had a bad dream; he is confronted by two shipwrecked travellers who land exhausted on the beach.[17]

It is as if the familiar situations, so thoroughly and skilfully exploited by Lope, have been worked to death and no longer have the power to capture the imagination of either playwright or audience. So he needs to have recourse to the unfamiliar, the exotic and the strange. Even the familiar scenes of love and courtship have to be given a novel and unusual twist: a handsome stranger is unexpectedly accosted by a masked lady who will not reveal her name.[18]

In some ways, this makes the job of the dramatist a rather more difficult and challenging one. To tickle the jaded palate of his

audience, he has to invent a new and unusual opening situation, or else give a novel twist to an old one. And then his problems are just beginning. The novelty of the situation may well attract his audience's attention, and rouse its curiosity; but unless he is careful, it will also puzzle and confuse it. He has much more explaining to do. His audience will want to know who the woman is, for instance, why she is dressed as a man, why she is on the mountain, who the prisoner is, why he is imprisoned in so remote a tower. And who is that king? Why is he dressed in skins? What did he dream about?

The dramatist cannot always leave his audience in suspense; he may have to provide an answer to these questions before he can proceed with the action. He is going to have to find a way of doing this without losing the goodwill and interest of his potentially extremely restive audience.

The most straightforward way of achieving this is to have his characters turn to each other, and to the audience, and explain who they are and how they came to be where they are. This is the solution Calderón adopts in El purgatorio de san Patricio (19)

Salen EGERIO, Rey de Irlanda, vestido de pieles,
LEOGARIO, POLONIA, LESBIA, y un CAPITÁN.

REY (furioso) Dejadme dar la muerte

LEOGARIO Señor, detente.

CAPITÁN Escucha...

LESBIA Mira...

POLONIA Advierte... (178a)

The King is furious; his retinue are concerned. He tells them he has had a terrible dream; one of the women asks him what he has dreamt:

POLONIA ¿Qué soñaste, que tanto te provoca?

REY ¡Ay hijas! Atended: ... (178b)

- and he goes on to tell them. Calderón has also made him tell us that the two women on stage are his daughters. The dream is important, it prefigures the action of the play, which describes St. Patrick's successful conversion of pagan Ireland to Christianity.

The arrival of the two shipwrecked strangers gives Calderón an excuse to have his King explain who he is:

REY Y porque no ignoréis quien soy, primero
mi nombre he de decir...
Yo soy el Rey Egerio... (180a)

and then why he wears skins:

REY El traje
más que de rey, de bárbaro salvaje
traigo; porque quisiera
fiera así parecer, pues que soy fiera (180a)

Now it is the turn of the shipwrecked strangers; first Patricio:

PATRICIO mi propio nombre es Patricio,
mi patria Irlanda o Hibernia,
mi pueblo es Tox... (180a)

- and so on for some 170 lines. After a brief interlude - in which Patricio interprets the King's dream, confirms it presages his own missionary activity, and almost gets killed for his pains - it is the other stranger's turn:

LUDOVICO Gran Egerio, Rey de Irlanda,
yo soy Ludovico Enio... (182a)

and so on, this time for some 290 lines.

One wonders how the original audience reacted to all this. To us it seems a very clumsy piece of stagecraft. To be sure, Calderón needed to establish both the barbarism of the Irish King and Ludovico's wickedness, and he needed to establish a contrast between them and the saintliness of his San Patricio. The earlier he can establish them as a convincingly savage King and a convincingly wicked individual, the greater will be the dramatic impact of the later damnation and conversion scenes. Conversely, the more we will be impressed by the miraculous powers of the Saint.

But one cannot help feeling that Calderón could have achieved his ends in a more convincingly dramatic manner; that he could have used the resources of the stage rather than of poetic declamation. He could, for instance, have cut down these speeches to a minimum and established his characters by means of action. The fact that he did not suggests either an immature grip of stage technique or an audience of widely differing tastes from our own,(20) or possibly a combination of both factors.

It is difficult to find a single Spanish play of the period that does not include at least one lengthy piece of recitation. This is an aspect of the Spanish theatrical tradition that is alien to present day experience. Particularly now, a British play containing speeches as lengthy as Patricio's or Ludovico's is something of a rarity; but then, as is well-known, speeches of such length were commonplace. Sometimes these speeches occur at surprisingly crucial moments in the play. One would almost naturally assume or expect a dramatist to round off each of his acts with a piece of action, a surprising or exciting event that moves the play forward at a fast pace; yet we find Tirso, for instance, ending the second act of his Por el sótano y el turno

with a long piece of recitation which, for all its length, was clearly designed to come as a climax to the act.(21) This kind of stagecraft presupposes a high degree of recitative skill in the actors, great resource of memory, and a highly developed taste in the supposedly notoriously restive theatre audience.

Clearly, if the audience had not enjoyed such long speeches, dramatists would not have been so ready to supply them, or actors to recite them. One has to assume that for the audience they formed an essential part of the absolutely astonishing variety of entertainment offered them in an afternoon at the corral.(22) For the actors, too, they would have offered a presumably welcome opportunity to display their skills.

At the same time, as we have noted, these speeches gave the dramatist a ready made opportunity to communicate to the audience information essential to the development of plot and theme. In some senses, then, the speech was both a necessity and a source of pleasure, as Calderón makes one of his characters point out:

DIONÍS ¿Qué es esto? Por qué dilatas
decirme la causa a mi,
si al cabo la he de saber?

CARLOS Pues fuerza y gusto ha de ser
el contarlo, escucha... (23)

and then, after a further prompt from Dionís, the actor launches into his big speech. Calderón has just introduced him on stage, he is presumably the 2nd galán, and this is a chance for the actor to establish his presence. So Calderón gives him a fine speech which is a pleasure to read and would doubtless be a pleasure to hear also.

But there are signs elsewhere in the play that Calderón was not

altogether happy with this straightforward method of exposition and wished to improve on it.[24]

At the very beginning of the play, as we have already stated, we are presented with a mystery: the King is discovered asleep at a writing desk:

> Tocan chirimías, y córrese una cortina; aparece el REY ENRIQUE durmiendo; delante una mesa, con recado de escribir, y a un lado ANA BOLENA. Y dice el REY entre sueños:
>
> Tente, sombra divina, imagen bella,
> sol eclipsado, deslucida estrella:
> mira que al sol ofendes
> cuando borrar tanto esplandor pretendes.
> ¿Porqué contra mi pecho airada vives?
>
> ANA — Yo tengo de borrar cuanto tu escribes. (VASE)
>
> REY (SONANDO) — Aguarda, escucha, espera.
> No desvanezcas en veloz esfera
> esa deidad tan presto.
> Oye....
>
> (DESPIERTA. SALE EL CARDENAL VOLSEO) (142)

Calderón can afford to leave us in suspense about the identity of the mysterious lady; but he does need to establish the identity of the two characters on stage. Costume tells us that one is a Cardinal, the other a King - but King of where?[25] Calderón makes Enrique explain:

> ENRIQUE — Yo soy el Octavo
> Enrique de Ingalaterra,
> hijo del Séptimo Enrique... (142b)

- and in the speech that follows, Calderón has his character explain who he is, the circumstances of his marriage with Doña Catalina, the fact that she is the widow of his brother Arturo, that her first marriage was unconsummated, that her second marriage needed to be

legitimised by the Pope, that England is a loyally Catholic country, that he considers it his duty to defend the Faith with pen and sword alike, and at present that he is writing a book that will defend the doctrine of the seven sacraments against the Lutheran heresy. This takes up some 78 lines, and then in the remaining 36 lines of his 114 line speech he answers Volseo's original question:

VOLSEO Cuéntame, pues, señor, lo que has soñado. (142a)

One senses that Calderón is in some difficulty here. All the preliminary information of Enrique's speech is essential to us, essential to the audience if we are going to be able fully to grasp the origins and implications of the tragedy that follows. On the most elementary level, we need to know who the actor is supposed to be representing, what country he is supposed to be reigning over, and so on; on a deeper level, Calderón is giving us essential information about the themes of his work - the conflict between the demands of public duty and private inclination, the religious issues raised by the rejection of the Pope's authority, and so on. It is a speech that he could hardly have dispensed with - yet it is largely irrelevant in the dramatic context in which he has placed it. For even though we do not know who Enrique is, or what he has been writing, Volseo obviously does; "Yo soy el Octavo / Enrique de Ingalaterra" is certainly news to us - but certainly not to him. One wonders how the actor playing Volseo was supposed to react as he heard this shattering piece of news; or how the actor playing Enrique was supposed to deliver it. Did he try to maintain the transparent pretence of delivering it to Volseo, or did he direct it straight at the audience? There is an awkwardness here that Calderón tries to smooth over in the opening

lines of Enrique's speech:

ENRIQUE Ya sabes (pero es forzoso
repetirlo, aunque lo sepas)
como yo soy el Octavo... (142b)

- and one imagines the parenthesis being delivered with at least a knowing nod, and perhaps a hint of apology, to the audience.(26)

So here Calderón has set himself a problem he has not satisfactorily resolved. He has opted to deliver essential items of information in the form of a long expository speech - yet he has failed to create a satisfactory setting for it. It does not really develop the dramatic action in any way, it is an awkward kind of hiatus, a piece of preliminary spadework, as it were; and on this occasion at least, Calderón has not really solved the problem of integrating his exposition into his play's dramatic action.

One wonders whether there are not other means he could have used to achieve the same end; whether, when he has chosen to use a long expository speech, it is really possible to create a satisfying dramatic setting for it. The first act of La vida es sueño provides some answers to these questions.

The opening that Calderón writes for Basilio's lengthy speech to the court of the Kingdom of Poland betrays not the slightest trace of the lack of artistic confidence discernible in Enrique's speech:

BASILIO estadme atentos,
amados sobrinos mios,
corte ilustre de Polonia,
vasallos, deudos y amigos;
ya sabéis que yo en el mundo
por mi ciencia he merecido
el sobrenombre de docto... (600-6)

Here again the "ya sabéis" gives us a clue as to what Calderón is up to; here again, he has to invent a convincing dramatic situation in

which a character can convey to others a piece of information known to them - but unknown to us. But this time he succeeds splendidly. Calderón has already used the dialogue between Estrella and Astolfo to inform us of their dynastic differences and to inform us, too, that this will be the occasion in which these differences are settled.(27) Basilio's speech is therefore not only eagerly awaited by the audience, but also by the two characters to whom it is principally addressed; and the information that they know, and we do not - Basilio's study of astrology(28) - is put in the context of a necessary introduction to a piece of information that is both new and utterly sensational: the fact that the King, whom we have been told has no heir(29) does, in fact, have a son. So the resolution of the question of succession takes a new and unexpected turn. There is no hiatus here; Calderón has succeeded in furthering the dramatic action and in establishing an essential piece of exposition. When King Enrique tells his minister he is "el Rey Enrique VIII de Ingalaterra" and is writing a book in defence of the Catholic faith, either the minister or the audience are out of place; when King Basilio calls his court to attention, he is also addressing us. We become extras to the scene, and in our imagination we, too, become members of the court of the Polish King.

So the speech is a superb tour de force, a fantastic opportunity for a gifted actor. But then, as well as so much else, La Vida es Sueño is an astonishing technical achievement. It is worth noting for instance, that Calderón succeeds in establishing not just one thread of complex narrative - but four. In fact, the more one reflects on the complexity of the plot structure, the more one is amazed by the complexity of the problems Calderón has set himself - and by the apparently effortless ease with which he solves them. So much has

happened before the play has even had time to begin - Rosaura has been seduced by Astolfo, Astolfo and Estrella have been trying to woo unavailingly, it seems, in an attempt to solve the problem of the succession to King Basilio, who has, before they even began, had a son, lost a wife, and imprisoned his son in a tower; his only confidant has been Clotaldo, who has been put in charge of the imprisoned Prince and who, as if that were not enough, has also seduced and deserted a Muscovite lady with the singularly appropriate name of Violante and who, unbeknownst to him, has subsequently given birth to a daughter. Somehow, all of this has to be communicated to the audience in a comprehensible and entertaining way.

Calderón has certainly set himself up with the opportunity for not just one, but a whole series of long explanatory speeches in the style of Patricio's, Ludovico's, Enrique's, or Basilio's. Indeed, Basilio's speech comes at the end of a series of cues for such lengthy pieces of spoken narrative. Calderón seems to take a certain delight in raising his audience's expectations, and then disappointing them.(30) In the scene that immediately precedes Basilio's, for instance, Astolfo seems about to be given his opportunity:

ASTOLFO
Muy mal informada estáis,
Estrella, pues que la fe
de mis finezas dudáis,
y os suplico que me oigáis
la causa... (510-14)

- and the speech begins confidently enough:

ASTOLFO
Falleció Eustorgio tercero
Rey de Polonia... (515-6)

However, it seems that Estrella's response is not propitious; and so, like a bad actor uncertain of his reception, Astolfo skates over the

opportunity for a good few hundred lines with an apologetic:

ASTOLFO
No quiero
cansar con lo que no tiene
lugar aquí. (519-21)

- and confines himself to the bare essentials, without the trimmings. Perhaps Calderón did not trust the actor;(31) or perhaps he simply felt that Basilio's part would give him better scope in which to develop his theme.(32)

A long narrative speech is cut short in a rather more spectacular fashion towards the beginning of the act. Calderón presents us with the figure of a woman dressed as a man; as Lope pointed out, this was very much to the taste of the public(33) and calculated to rouse their interest and curiosity. Tirso uses the same trick at the beginning of his Don Gil de las calzas verdes: he opens his play by having Doña Juana make an entrance in provocatively male attire.(34) But Tirso satisfies our curiosity at once - he has her explain to her servant in a straightforward fashion what has happened to her and why she is dressed this way.(35) But unlike Tirso, Calderón does not immediately satisfy our curiosity. He sets up a mystery, and delays its solution.

To be sure, the actress playing Rosaura seems to be about to be given an opportunity to make a big speech - at the end of her first dialogue with Segismundo:

ROSAURA
Y por si acaso mis penas
pueden aliviarte en parte,
óyelas atento, y toma
las que de ellas me sobraren.
Yo soy... (273-7)

- but at this crucial moment, Calderón confounds our expectations; he has Clotaldo interrupt the speech:(36)

CLOTALDO (DENTRO) Guardas de esta torre,
que dormidas o cobardes,
disteis paso a dos personas
que han quebrantado el cárcel... (277-80)

- and not only interrupt it, but bundle its intended audience into the discovery area, which becomes a prison:

CLOTALDO La puerta
Cerrad de esa estrecha cárcel:
escondedle en ella.

(CIÉRRANLE LA PUERTA, Y DICE DENTRO)

SEGISMUNDO ¡Ah, cielos
qué bien hacéis en quitarme
la libertad!... (329-31)

So Rosaura is left with an unfinished speech, and we are left in suspense. The actress playing Rosaura has to wait for her big speech until the third act[37] - but we, the audience, clearly cannot wait that long.

But Calderón has another surprise up his sleeve; the next piece of exposition comes not from Rosaura, but from Clotaldo - and part of the information he gives is erroneous. She hands him her sword; his unexpected reaction to it suggests a new mystery:

CLOTALDO (APARTE) ¡Santos cielos!
¿Qué es esto? (377-8)

- mystery partially clarified in the aside Calderón now introduces -

CLOTALDO Esta espada es la que yo
dejé a la hermosa Violante... (399-400)

But here the whole process is given a new twist; for Clotaldo comes to a mistaken conclusion:

CLOTALDO Éste es mi hijo... (413)

In one respect we are one step ahead of Clotaldo at this point: there is no question of Rosaura's disguise deceiving the audience. We can infer she is his daughter; we can guess the nature of the 'agravio' she has suffered. But we do not know the identity of her assailant - and of course we do not know what kind of revenge she proposes to take. As one would expect, Calderón leaves us in suspense as he shifts the focus onto another aspect of his plot.

He leaves us in the dark until the final scene of the first act. Again, the scene is beautifully crafted. He has Clotaldo try to conceal his passionate concern under a mask of polite interest; Rosaura reveals her assailant's identity:

ROSAURA El contrario ha sido
no menos que Astolfo, Duque
de Moscovia. (943-5)

Then, in response to Clotaldo's argument that since Astolfo is 'his' Prince, he could not insult 'him', Rosaura unwittingly reveals her true identity:

ROSAURA Yo sé
que aunque mi Príncipe ha sido
pudo agraviarme.

CLOTALDO No pudo,
aunque pusiera, atrevido,
la mano en tu rostro. (AP: ¡Ay cielos!)

ROSAURA Mayor fue el agravio mío. (954-9)

All the pieces now fit together in an unmistakeable way. With a very characteristic thoroughness, Calderón takes the trouble to make it absolutely clear that we, the audience, now know that Clotaldo also knows:

CLOTALDO Mi honor es el agraviado,
poderoso el enemigo,
yo vasallo, ella mujer. (978-80)

- and as the act closes we are left wondering how this piece of knowledge will affect what happens next.

So the exposition of Clotaldo and Rosaura's past is very different from the exposition of Basilio and Segismundo's: Calderón chooses to use a technique that is not a static piece of declaration or narrative that halts the play's action - but a dynamic process that directly affects its development. In Basilio's speech we have a wonderful example of a formalised, static piece of exposition, skilfully integrated into its dramatic context; Clotaldo's discovery of his past is a more fragmented affair, in which information is painfully prised out of the dramatic situation through interruptions, misinterpretation, and moments of deep emotion. Like any good dramatist, Calderón knows how to vary the pace, is aware of the fact that an audience can weary of a frenetic procession of rapid events as it can tire of a plodding, uneventful and unexciting progress.

But the contrast between the two techniques has a deeper significance. Both are techniques Calderón needs to use in order to explain the past, to explain the influence of past decisions, past actions, on the present moment. Basilio's magnificent expository speech presents us with an image of a man who at least feels in command of the past. He seems to have all the facts at his disposal, he can marshal them in rhetorical periods[38] - the birth and horoscope of his son, the death of his wife, the decision he took to imprison his son... all these he can enumerate with elegance and with authority. Here is a man who thinks he has control over the future; it is only logical to find him in complete control of his past.

Clotaldo's response to the past is very different. Here, too, we have a man having to confront a secret event in the past - not the concealed birth of a son, but the concealed birth of a daughter. But, unlike Basilio, Clotaldo has no illusions as to his control over, and knowledge of, past events. The past is not an open book to him, the facts are not at his disposal. As we have seen, he discovers his past little by little, in fits and starts; he misinterprets on the basis of false information, needs to change, revise, alter his conclusions.

For Basilio, life is a wonderfully ordered progression of cosmic harmonies, a majestic display of harmonious beauty;

BASILIO
Esos círculos de nieve,
esos doseles de vidrio
que el sol ilumina a rayos,
que parte la luna a giros,
esos orbes de diamantes,
esos globos cristalinos... (624-9)

He speaks of clarity, of light, of order; and although the world confronts humans with difficult decisions, these are dilemmas the sage can resolve if he applies his intellect and his judgement. At this stage, orderly, decisive action is a real possibility for Basilio; for Clotaldo it often seems impossible:

CLOTALDO
¿Qué he de hacer, ¡ay de mi!
en confusión semejante?... (405-6)

CLOTALDO
¿Qué he de hacer? ¡Válgame el cielo!
¿Qué he de hacer? (427-8)

Life seems far from clear, it is a murky confusion:

CLOTALDO
¿Qué confuso laberinto
es éste donde no puede
hallar la razón el hilo? (975-7)

For Clotaldo, there are no portents to guide us, no omens to warn us or give us clues. Life itself, the whole of it, seems a bad omen, an outrage of order:

CLOTALDO en tan confuso abismo
es todo el cielo un presagio
y es todo el mundo un prodigio (983-5)

We are moving in an altogether different world from the kind of luminous present Lope creates in Peribáñez. Calderón is concerned with the power of the past to shape, and perhaps to blight, the present moment - and this demands new forms of expository technique. As Parker has shown, this awareness of an "unbreakable chain of cause and effect"(39) stretching from the past, through the present and into the future is an integral part of Calderón's conception of tragedy. A new conception of tragedy demanded new techniques of playwriting; in La vida es sueño we can see how two contrasting techniques can be used to convey very different senses of the nature of human life.

NOTES

(1) Lope de Vega, El arte nuevo de hacer comedias, ed. Juana de José Prades (Madrid, 1971), l. 298 and p. 189. See also Juan Manuel Rozas, Significado y doctrina del "Arte nuevo" de Lope de Vega (Madrid, 1976).

(2) Cf. Warren T. McCready's commentary on this passage: "No es tan fácil como parece. Hay que establecer la identidad de los personajes, mostrar la relación de unos con otros y presentar el problema o conflicto que haya de resolverse, y al mismo tiempo captar y retener el interés del auditorio. El éxito del primer acto, pues, depende de una mano experimentada y hábil." in his La heráldica en las obras de Lope de Vega y sus contemporáneos (Toronto, 1962), pp. 404-5.

(3) Ed. J. M. Ruano and J. E. Varey (London, 1980).

(4) There was a small area at the back, covered by a curtain or a door, the so-called "discovery area". See Shergold's History of the Spanish Stage (Oxford, 1967), p. 401. Only a very limited number of characters could be "discovered" in this area. Calderón uses such a device to begin his La cisma de Ingalaterra.

(5) In the course of the play, Lope frequently draws our attention to the costume the characters are wearing, especially to Casilda's (cf. 346-7, 669-89, SD 966, 1026-7, 1572-3, 1576-7, 3125-8). Costume is primarily a visible sign of social class; in a play dealing with the clash between classes, costume, as Ruano and Varey point out, "is of cardinal importance" (ed. cit., p. 45).

(6) The most accessible source of information about acting companies in 17th century Spain is Shergold, History, Chapter 18, "The actors and their audience".

(7) "The 17th century audience was restive, and the actors had to dominate from the outset. The wedding scene at the beginning of act I with guests and musicians filling the stage was intended to centre the public's attention on the action" (ed. cit., p. 43).

(8) In particular, see E. M. Wilson, "Images et structures dans Peribáñez", BH 51 (1949), pp. 125-59; J.T. Boorman, "Divina ley y derecho humano en Peribáñez", BCom 13 (1960), pp. 12-14. (1960), pp. 12-14.

(9) Plays probably began with a piece of music, and then the loa. See Shergold, op. cit., p. 380; Jean-Louis Flecniakowska, "Le 'loa' comme source pour la connaissances des rapports troupe-public" in Dramaturgie et Société, vol. I (Paris, 1968), pp. 111-6. Of course nowadays, when they are performed at all, Golden Age plays tend to be performed without the loa; actors involved in such productions have told me that the first scene is often a very difficult one to carry.

(10) El mejor alcalde, el rey, ed. J. Gomez Ocerín and R.M. Tenreiro,, Clásicos Castellanos.

(11) El caballero de Olmedo, ed. I.I. MacDonald (Cambridge, 1971).

(12) La discreta enamorada, edicion Austral (Madrid, 1967).

(13) Los comendadores de Cordoba, ed, Menéndez y Pelayo, in BAE, vol. CCIV, pp. 1-61.

(14) Naturally enough, the resources of the court stage were very different. See Shergold, History of the Spanish Stage, chapters 10-11.

(15) La vida es sueño, ed. A. Sloman (Manchester, 1961).

(16) La cisma de Ingalaterra, ed. A. Valbuena Briones, in Calderón de la Barca, Obras completas I: dramas, 5th ed. (Madrid, 1966) , pp. 141-73.

(17) El purgatorio de San Patricio, in Obras completas I, pp. 175-210.

(18) Casa con dos puertas, ed. A. Valbuena Briones, in Calderón de la Barca, Obras completas II: comedias, 2nd ed. (Madrid, 1960), pp. 273-309. As far as comedias de capa y espada were concerned, the problem of audience satiety seems to have been most acute. Cf. Bances Candamo: "Estas comedias de capa y espada han caído ya de estimación, porque pocos lances puede ofrecer la limitada materia de un galanteo particular que no se parezcan vnos a otros, y solo don Pedro Calderón los supo estrechar de modo que tubiesen viueza y gracia, suspensión en enlazarlos, trauesura gustosa en deshacerlos" Theatro de los theatros, p. 33. Bances Candamo is describing after Calderón's death a process that was obviously well underway when he was still alive. It is highly significant that he should single out Calderón's skill at giving new life to old material.

(19) First published in Calderon's Primera parte in 1636. Valbuena Briones suggests 1628 as a possible date of composition (ed. cit., p. 176).

(20) When the play was being censored for a performance in 1652, the censor disapproved of this speech. He wrote in his aprobación, referring back to the play's first performance: "cuando se represento la primera vez en esta corte la dieron (aprobacion) otros hombres doctos, y entonces como censor dellas yce un reparo que buelbo a acer agora que fue que Ludobico Enio en la primera relacion que ace de su mala vida pinta escandalosamente vn sacrilejo de sacar vna monja de vn conbento esto me parecio se quitase como se quito el ascandalo de oirle, y asi me parece agora lo mismo pues con el resto del romance en que pone su mala vida le sobran atrocidades" (quoted by E.M. Wilson,'Calderón and the Stage Censor in the Seventeenth Century: A Provisional Study', Symposium (1961), pp. 165-84). It is interesting that the speech was considered so scandalous as to have been partly cut in performance. Presumably this would have been one source of its appeal to an audience; E.M. Wilson also notes its popularity as a pliego suelto in the 18th and early 19th centuries (art. cit., p. 171-2 and n. 16).

(21) Tirso de Molina, Por el sótano y el turno, ed. A. Zamora Vicente (Buenos Aires, 1949), ll. 659-950. The whole speech has a highly suggestive sexual content; this partly explains its appeal.

(22) When confronted with a printed text, it is all too easy to forget that this only represented a portion of the afternoon's entertainment. According to Shergold, a typical pattern would be Song/Dance - Loa - Act I - Entremes - Act II - Entremes - Act III - Dance. Much work remains to be done on how the various elements were integrated into one whole.

(23) La Cisma de Ingalaterra, ed. cit., p. 146b.

(24) This may be an early play, which could explain certain hesitations in this aspect of Calderon's technique. There are records of a palace performance of a play with this title in 1627 (see N.D. Shergold and J.E. Varey, 'Some Early Calderón Dates', BHS 38 (1961), pp. 274-86), but A.A. Parker doubts that it could be this particular play. See his invaluable study 'Henry VIII in Shakespeare and Calderón. An appreciation of La cisma de Ingalaterra', MLR 43 (1948), pp. 327-52. The play was not published until 1684; perhaps what we have is a revision of the play Calderón had performed in the palace in 1627. The play is unusual in other technical aspects, too - particularly Calderón's use of the discovery area - and in this respect the play deserves more consideration.

(25) Of course, the audience could have guessed from the title; Calderón, nothing if not painstaking, is just making doubly sure everyone knows exactly who it is they are watching.

(26) Calderón mocks the technique in the opening scene of his Hombre pobre todo es trazas. His galán, Diego, prefaces his expository speech to his servant with these words:

DIEGO ¿No has visto en una comedia
verse dos, y en dos razones
hacerse mil relaciones
de su gusto y su tragedia?
Pues imitemos aquí
su estilo.... (Obras Completas, II, p. 204a)

(27) Ed. cit., ll. 545-50.

(28) Calderón has already hinted at it in ll. 535-8.

(29) l. 538. Such dynastic considerations would have a greater interest for their original audience, in the context of anxieties surrounding Philip IV's succession.

(30) The play contains several technical jokes - e.g. Clarín's comical allusion to autos sacramentales (347-54) and his parody of a typical Calderón description of a horse (2672-87).

(31) An invaluable study of the conditions of the play's first performance is N.D. Shergold's 'La vida es sueño: ses acteurs, son théâtre, et son public' in Dramaturgie et société, I (Paris 1968), pp. 93-111; A.K.G. Paterson draws on it for his equally fascinating study 'The Traffic of the Stage in Calderón's La vida es sueño', Renaissance Drama 4 (1971), pp. 155-83.

(32) Clearly problems of freewill and astrology would not sound the least appropriate in Astolfo's part!

(33) "suele el disfraz varonil agradar mucho" (Arte nuevo de hacer comedias, ed. cit., 283-4). See also M. Romera-Navarro, 'Las disfrazadas de varón de las comedias', HR 2 (1934), pp. 269-86; and Carmen Bravo Villasante, La mujer vestida de hombre en el teatro español (Madrid, 1955).

(34) It seems clear that one reason why actresses in male attire were so popular was because male members of the audience found them sexually attractive. This was seized on by the opponents of the theatre. Romera-Navarro quotes one outraged comtemporary moralist: "ha de ser mas que de hielo el hombre que no se abrase en lujuria viendo una mujer desenfadada y desenvuelta, y algunas veces, para este efecto, vestido como hombre, haciendo cosas que movieran a un muerto" (emphasis mine) in Romera-Navarro, art. cit.

(35) Tirso also teases his audience's expectations, but not quite on the same gigantic scale. He makes doña Juana tease her servant for 60 lines before finally consenting to tell him the reason for her disguise at I:61 (ed. Manuel Gil, Clásicos Ebro).

(36) This is a device commonly used by Calderón. See, for example, Lisardo's speech in Casa con dos puertas (p. 282b) and Curcio's in La devoción de la cruz (ed. S.F. Wexler (Salamanca, 1966), I:625-729).

(37) She finally gets 321 lines in act III (2690-2921). So Calderón manages to soothe the ego of his leading lady; and he writes for her a speech thatis crucially important for all kinds of other reasons, too, as Segismundo's monologue reveals (2922-2997).

(38) The section of the audience that was educated at all would of course have had a thorough grounding in rhetoric. See John V. Bryans, Calderón de la Barca: Imagery, Rhetoric and Drama (London, 1977).

(39) 'Towards a Definition of Calderonian Tragedy', BHS, 39 (1962), p. 230.

C H A P T E R T W O

"Cayó el caballo..."

Now, perhaps, we can begin to appreciate the technique of the opening of Calderón's El médico de su honra.[1] In the examples we have so far studied, we have seen that the dramatist needs, first of all, to capture the attention of his audience with an arresting or unusual dramatic event. Next, he needs to heighten that attention through the giving, or perhaps even the withholding, of various items of information essential for an understanding of the drama. He can impart such information in various ways. He can either give it us in one piece, as it were, by giving one of his characters a long expository speech, sometimes a simple narrative, in which the situation is explained in a straightforward way. If he chooses this method, then he needs to use all his resources of poetry and rhetoric to hold the attention of his audience; he also needs to devise a plausible and satisfying dramatic situation in which to place his speech. We have seen how, for example, Basilio's long speech in Act I of La vida es sueño fulfills at least the second of these two requirements.

Alternately, he can try to communicate the necessary information in a more dynamic way, using dialogue and incident. This technique is harder to pin down and identify; we have partly examined it at work in the exposition of the relationship between Rosaura and Clotaldo in La vida es sueño. In El médico de su honra, as we shall see, Calderón uses a further refinement of both techniques.

In this particular play, Calderón has not set himself quite so many seemingly intractable problems as in La vida es sueño. He has not undertaken to communicate quite so many multiple threads of narrative, and he can count on a greater degree of prior knowledge on the part of his audience. We can isolate 3 threads of narrative that need to be communicated to the audience. These are: the story of the past

relationship between Enrique and Mencía, the story of the past relationship between Gutierre and Leonor, and the story of the conflict between King Pedro and his brother Enrique. The first two belong to fiction, the last is historical. It needs to be extended both into the past, and into the future: in particular, the closing scenes of the play gain in impact if we bear in mind that King Pedro is to be killed by his half-brother Enrique, who will then usurp his throne.(2)

These historical facts, and the stories built up around them, would doubtless have been familiar to many of Calderón's audience. King Pedro was a notorious figure, the subject of many ballads, and a popular stage character, sometimes in plays of a very sensational kind.(3) It is also worth noting that King Pedro was the subject of protracted intellectual debate. The question of whether he was truly "El Cruel" or "El Justiciero" was one that had direct relevance to contemporary political issues.(4)

The precise nature of this debate need not concern us, and it would be fruitless to try to determine whether Calderón's audience would come to the play favourably or infavourably disposed towards the King on the grounds of the romances and plays in circulation at the time. The important point for our purposes is that King Pedro was a historical figure well-known in both popular and intellectual circles alike. This would have had a crucial effect on Calderón's writing. There is a great difference between trying to communicate the relevant facts about a King of an alien, or fictional past - such as a King "Eustorgio tercero" of Poland, or an "Enrique octavo" of England - and trying to communicate similar facts about a King who has featured prominently in the national history of your audience. There is no need for Calderón to write a long speech for the King in which, for instance,

he recounts the story of Enrique's illegitimate birth and the long series of disagreements between them. He does not have to communicate new information to his audience so much as remind them of what they may already know.

It is the same with the two fictional threads of his story. Calderón has taken these over from the play of the same title, El médico de su honra, attributed to Lope de Vega,(5) a play that had already been performed on the public stage in Madrid, and possibly in the King's palace also.(6) So here again, Calderón is dealing with a story that is probably familiar to many of his audience.

In the pages that follow, we shall be examining the way Calderón presents each of these three threads of his story in turn. This will follow the natural division of the play's first act into three parts. The first (I:1-44) is a very short scene that attracts the audience's attention, and centres on Prince Enrique's fall, and the tension between him and the King. The second (I:44-574) focuses on Enrique's past relationship with Mencía, and the tension caused by her present marriage to Gutierre. The third (I:575-1020) focuses on Gutierre's past relationship with Leonor, and on the King's attempt to resolve the problems caused by Gutierre's marriage to Mencía. By the end of his first act, then, Calderón has followed Lope's advice and "puesto el caso": he has presented us with all the facts we need to know to appreciate the tragedy that unfolds in the two acts that are to come.

"Suena ruido de caja, y sale cayendo el Infante
don Enrique, y don Arias, y don Diego y algo
detrás el Rey don Pedro, todos de camino." (SD p. 1)

As any circus artist knows, the beat of a drum is a wonderfully simple and effective way of attracting the attention of an audience. It reduces them to silence, heightens expectation. The drum beat abruptly ends: an actor falls onto the stage. It is an extraordinary and spectacular beginning. Having used it to call his audience to attention, Calderón amplifies the event, explains it, identifies the characters involved in it. He does so rapidly, tautly, and effectively, using both dialogue and costume to achieve his ends.

All the actors are dressed "de camino", in travelling gear. This detail of costume is significant. The precise details of its appearance need not really concern us, though we can assume that the actors would be wearing outdoor cloaks and riding boots. The stage direction of the source play gives a more detailed picture of Enrique's costume:

"traen entre todos desmayado al Infante don Enrique,
vestido de camino, pluma, botas y espuelas" (SD p. 115b)

- details confirmed by Mencía's speech a little later on (I:45-72); this speech indicates that Enrique would be dressed in a stylish and elegant manner.(7)

A much more important consideration is the information such costume would convey to the audience. As is well known, in the absence of scenery, playwrights used different kinds of costume to indicate time and place. As they enter, then, the actors' costume establishes the scene as being set out of doors. The change of scene to the interior at line 45 would be simply effected by the exit of the actors

in their outdoor costume, and the entrance, through the other door, of the two actresses playing Mencía and Jacinta dressed for indoors.

Of course, outdoor costume also gives information about the activity the characters are supposed to be engaging in as they make their entrance. They are dressed "de camino" - as its name implies, the audience can deduce from this that they are on a journey, that some accident has occurred.(8)

So Calderón has no need to dwell on this point; he can have his characters briskly confirm his audience's informed speculations. This is the most basic function of the play's opening lines. From them, we learn that the character on the ground has fallen off his horse, that he and those who accompany him are nearing the end of a journey from Castilla to Sevilla:

REY ¿Qué fué?

DON ARIAS Cayó
el caballo, y arrojó
desde él al Infante al suelo.

REY Si las torres de Sevilla
saluda de esa manera
¡nunca a Sevilla viniera
nunca dejara a Castilla!
¡Enrique! ¡Hermano!

DON DIEGO ¡Señor! (I:2-9)

Of course, we also learn the characters' identity - that the actor on the ground is playing Enrique, a Prince; of the characters that surround him, we learn that two are subordinates,(9) the third his brother the King.(10)

In part, of course, experienced playgoers in the audience would be able to guess the basic identity of the characters - the high degree of typecasting would enable them to recognise the actor playing

Enrique as the one who normally played the galán, and to recognise the actor playing Pedro as the one who normally played the King.

Clues to more precise identity are provided by lines 4:

ARIAS Desde él al Infante al suelo

and 9:

REY ¡Enrique! ¡Hermano!

These lines remind us that the King in question is King Pedro I of Castilla, known as "el Justiciero" or "el Cruel", killed in battle by his half brother Enrique II.

Calderón has therefore established the basic facts very quickly indeed. Here again, the contrast between the technique he employs here and that of the first act of La vida es sueño may be instructive. In that play, as we have seen, the audience is confronted with a mystery that remains unsolved almost to the end of the first act. By contrast, here there is no mystery - at least not at first sight. We are not lost in the trackless wastes of some distant country; we are on the road from Castilla to Sevilla, in sight of the city. Unlike a journey into the Polish mountains, there is nothing outlandish, exotic or strange about such a journey - some members of the audience may even have made it themselves.

There is nothing particularly strange about the situation these characters are involved in, either: we are not dealing with a woman travelling in disguise from Moscow to Poland on a quest to recover her honour, nor the prince of a strange country kept imprisoned in a dark tower. A Prince of Spain has fallen from his horse.

So the particular situation, its historical context, the

characters involved in it - all this has been quickly established, and however alien it may appear to us, we can assume it would not have appeared so to its audience. Nor was it intended to appear so. Calderón is not seeking to gain impact from the exotic: his opening situation is serious, to be sure, but it is not utterly outside the audience's experience: a Prince has fallen from his horse, he is badly hurt, he may not recover.(11)

We run the risk of labouring the point; it may be objected that we are confining ourselve to trivialities. But it is important to remember that no artist is going to be able to communicate anything important or profound about the so-called 'human condition' without having achieved mastery over the basics of the chosen medium. Unless the dramatist can communicate such banal information in a comprehensible and interesting fashion, then little else will ever be achieved. Even Calderón has to find a way of communicating the trivial: it is a mark of a great artist to use even the most unpromising of necessities as an opportunity to convey something more.(12)

Let us take as an example the entrance of the King. Calderón has devised a very striking entrance for the actor playing Enrique, one certainly calculated to attract the audience's attention; that is all very well, but having made his actor fall to the ground, he cannot simply be left lying. He needs to be accounted for, the event demands an explanation. Once the expressions of fear, surprise, shock and sorrow are over, a line such as Arias'

ARIAS Cayó
el caballo, y arrojó
desde él al Infante al suelo (I:2-4)

- is an obvious one to use, it sums the situation up rapidly and succinctly. But the line cannot be spoken to the air, it is not the

stuff soliloquies are made of. Spoken to Diego, it would be superfluous - he saw what happened - and so Calderón needs to delay the entrance of his King. His entrance "algo detrás" provides a plausible cue -

REY ¿Qué fué?

ARIAS Cayó
el caballo.... (I:2-3)

So the timing of the King's entrance meets a fairly trivial technical requirement - but Calderón uses this to convey more. The story of Pedro and Enrique is a story of conflict: here is an opportunity to suggest it. The two brothers are making the same journey, but they do not travel together. The grouping of the characters suggests that Arias and Diego have been travelling with Enrique; the King's delayed entrance suggests he has been travelling alone.

We have already noted how the short piece of dialogue that follows establishes the basic situation and the names of the characters; it also sketches out the relationships between them.

The King's reaction to his brother's misfortune is somewhat equivocal:

REY Si las torres de Sevilla
saluda de esa manera
¡nunca a Sevilla viniera
nunca dejara a Castilla!
¡Enrique! ¡Hermano!

DON DIEGO ¡Señor!

REY ¿No vuelve? (I:5-10)

The actor's response is crucial here. One can imagine such lines being spoken in sorrow, or anger - or perhaps a combination of

both. They could be made to express a genuine regret that the Prince had left Castilla, that the incident had ever occurred - or irritation at his rashness, his impetuosity, his foolishness. By making Enrique the subject of "saluda" - what a way for him to greet Seville - it is as if Pedro is implying that Enrique is responsible for his own misfortune. As one commonly does in such moments, the King almost implies that Enrique's accident was some kind of quirkish, deliberate gesture on his part, done specifically to annoy his elder brother. The final "¿No vuelve?", then, expresses a kind of exasperated concern.

Certainly the other lines Calderón writes for the King communicate the impression of a man in desperate haste, furious at the slightest delay. The King is a man of few words;[13] apart from this brief speech, he wastes no time with expressions of grief or dismay; he simply asks what has happened, proposes a solution, and leaves.

He gives no reason for his departure other than the dictates of his own will:

REY
He de pasar adelante:
que aunque este horror y mancilla
mi rémora pudo ser,
no me quiero detener
hasta llegar a Sevilla. (I:18-24)

He gives every indication of forcefulness of character. He comes to a rapid decision as to what should be done; having reached his decision, he communicates it with authority:

REY
Llegad a esta quinta bella,
que está del camino al paso
don Arias, a ver si acaso
recogido un poco en ella
cobra salud el Infante.
Todos os quedad aquí
y dadme un caballo a mí... (I:13-17)

Having made his orders, he acts with the absolute security of one who is confident they will be obeyed.

He does, however, admit that he could stay:

REY aunque este horror y mancilla
mi rémora pudo ser... (I:21-2)

Calderón is using the image to communicate the idea of a man who at least is claiming to be strong-willed. According to traditional lore,(14) the "rémora" was a small fish whose enormous strength belied its diminutive size. Once it had attached itself to a ship's rudder, it was reputedly strong enough to halt even a galleon under full sail. Compared with the weight of his own concerns, Calderón makes Pedro imply, the possibly fatal injury of a brother is a small matter indeed - a small fish to halt the gigantic ship of state.

The "rémora" exerted a pull out of all proportion to its size. In the same way, the emotional ties of a brother's life could divert him, the King, from weighty concerns of state. The episode is unfortunate - "este horror y mancilla" - the pull of his feelings is correspondingly strong: but his will is the stronger. He has an obligation to his duty; so he must leave: "he de pasar adelante".(15)

For Arias and Diego, the incident is a "desdicha", a source of grief, an event to be mourned. We must imagine them reacting with horror and shock to the King's decision; for the King it is a "suceso" (I:26) - an incident to be dealt with as rapidly and as decisively as possible, and then passed on from.

What Calderón is hinting at here, I think, as he presents the King's brusque justification for his departure, is the problem posed by the clash between the demands made on the King as a public person, with a role to play and duties to fulfil, and the emotional demands

faced by the King as a private individual. This foreshadows the dilemma faced by the King in the play's closing scenes, in which he has to pass public judgement on an act that fills him with horror.(16)

The problem, of course, is not one that is confined to Kings, but one that is brought into play each time a decision has to be taken in which the demands of what is reasonable appear to clash with the demands of one's own feelings. It is a problem that must have possessed a particular urgency to one living under the rule of a King such as Philip IV who so often and so conspicuously preferred to indulge in private pleasure rather than fulfil the demands of public duty.

So it is not surprising to find the problem reflected on so often in the works of Calderón, particularly in the light of his own close relationship with his King. One example may help to illuminate its occurrence in this play. It comes from La cisma de Ingalaterra a haunting aside spoken by Pasquín, the play's sad gracioso, at the beginning of the second act:

PASQUÍN Triste está el Rey. ¿De qué sirve
cuando puede, cuando manda,
si no puede estar alegre
cuando quiere? (153a)

The King is sad because he has met Ana Bolena and is in love with her; Pasquín taunts him to his face for his melancholy:

PASQUÍN Asi vos, después de ser
un soberano monarca
Rey temido y estimado
por el ingenio y las armas
no podéis estar alegre
cosa tan vil y tan baja
que aún el pícaro desnudo
y muerto de hambre se halla (153a)

It is as if this King, Pedro, will not allow himself to fall into such states of emotional helplessness; he will not be deflected by such

accidents of grief -

REY Mi rémora pudo ser...

- or be moved by laughter. For it is this same distinction between the King as Monarch and the King as a private individual that lies at the heart of the fascinating scenes that are to follow, in which the King refuses to laugh at the jokes of his jester.(17) Coquín protests at the King's inhumanity(18) - but we are left with the problem of how far the King can allow himself to be human in the sense of allowing himself to be swayed by his feelings. The example of Enrique of England suggests that he should not - but there is a price to be paid. What are we to make of this King who leaves his brother where he may die in the road?

There would be many in the audience who would consider such "entereza" as commendable and praiseworthy self-command.(19) Calderón places on stage one who would not agree with them:

DON ARIAS Esta ocasión
de su fiera condición
ha sido bastante prueba.
¿Quién a un hermano dejara
tropezando desta suerte
en los brazos de la muerte?
¡Vive Dios! (I:26-31)

One certainly should not take such a speech as "proof" of the King's "cruelty". The whole tone of the speech, particularly the expletive that ends it,(20) indicates that it is to be spoken in inconsiderate anger. Its structure as a whole also suggests that it may be one of a series in which Arias, a supporter of Enrique,(21) has been trying to win Diego over to his cause. He is trying to convince Diego of the King's cruelty: "surely, now," he is saying, "you have

proof enough".

Arias, then, is trying to undermine the position of the King. This may give a new dimension to the King's isolation, his impatience with his brother, his desire to leave him quickly and get to Sevilla, even the apparent authority of his commands. These are all hints of an insecure ruler trying to maintain self-command in a situation fraught with uncertainty, a man beset with fear and self-doubt. Calderón is leaving many hints for a fine actor - and, of course, all this will be magnificently acted later on in the play.(22) Here we have simply hints of what is to come.

The conflict does not only strike fear in the heart of the King; Diego, too, is affected by it. Arias' boldness draws forth a cautious response:

DON DIEGO Calla, y repara
en que, si oyen las paredes,
los troncos, don Arias, ven,
y nada nos está bien. (I:32-5)

Calderón may intend this as a reference to the Alarcón play(23) - or perhaps simply to the proverb from which its title is derived. It is a proverb that calls for the utmost care, secrecy, confidentiality, circumspection.(24) "Walls have ears": the saying reflects a paranoia, a fear of spies, of being overheard, certainly appropriate to our own urban environment. This fear, applied to the open country, reflects a fear magnified to the extreme. Arias has been speaking treason; Diego is in desperate fear of the consequences. We are given a brief glimpse of a society torn by internal conflict, by mutual suspicion and distrust.(25) And, as occurs so often in the play, in fear a character seeks refuge in silence.(26)

Arias, however, refuses to be cowed; as he makes his exit, he

fiercely reaffirms his loyalty to Enrique:

ARIAS Viva Enrique, y otro bien
la suerte no me conceda (I:43-44)

His master's life, he is saying, is all that matters to him now. But Calderón takes a little care to distance us from such whole-hearted support of a partisan cause. Arias' fierce expression of loyalty needs to be seen in the context of the moment of muddle and indecision that precedes it:

ARIAS Tú, don Diego, llegar puedes
a esa quinta; y di que aquí
el Infante mi señor
cayó. Pero no; mejor
será que los dos así
le llevemos donde puede
descansar.

DIEGO Has dicho bien.

ARIAS Viva Enrique.... (I:36-43)

Here again, Calderón is extracting as much as he can from what may seem a minor technical point. The actor playing Enrique is out there on stage, lying on his back, pretending to be unconscious. For all practical purposes he counts as a corpse. Corpses on an open stage pose all kinds of problems.

One way to avoid such problems is to have your "corpse" fall "dead" into the dressing room. That is how Cervantes handles it in his El gallardo espanol.(27) But Calderón has to have Enrique fall on stage - or he loses the whole point of his dramatic entrance.(28) If he is left there, he will only get in the way. One solution would be to have Enrique make a miraculous recovery - and walk off. But Calderón would hardly have felt this to be the right moment - it would spoil the recovery scene with his leading lady. So some plausible means has

to be devised to enable Enrique to be carried off.

That is the function of lines 39-42, and they provide an obvious, and acceptable solution to the problem. So the two characters are to decide to pick up their "Prince" and carry him to seek help. Nothing could be simpler.

But one is left with the problem of why Calderón chose to write lines 36-9; why, indeed, he even has his Diego begin to walk off the stage, before Arias calls him back. Arias' first suggestion is utterly impractical in theatrical terms - if Diego really had made his exit at this point, and left Arias alone with the body, there would have been really no way of disposing of it before the next scene. So what is Calderón up to here? Is he trying to keep his audience on its toes, so to speak, or indulge in some private technical joke for the benefit of the cognoscenti?

Perhaps there is more involved here. Even in a detail of such apparent triviality, Calderón seems to be touching his play's deepest concerns. Taken as a whole, it could be said the play deals with the futility of certain kinds of human effort. Its plot is almost an illustration of the kind of dramatic irony Shakespeare has Horatio find in the plot of Hamlet:

HORATIO So shall you hear
Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,
Of accidental judgements, casual slaughters,
Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause,
And, in this upshot, purposes mistook
Fall'n on the inventors' heads... (V:ii)

After all, the protagonist of Calderón's play is a man who, in his attempts to avoid dishonour of one kind, falls into a dishonour of a much greater and more terrible kind. In a particularly cruel and unnecessary fashion, he slaughters his own wife on the altar of his

honour. Mencía, seeking to prove her innocence, only confirms her guilt. Leonor, seeking for a solution to the wreckage of her life, finds it in her almost certain death. The King, who tries to be just, simply perpetuates a greater injustice. Enrique, the one character who acts with an utter fecklessness and irresponsibility, is the man we know shall eventually emerge as ruler in his brother's stead. The minor characters are not exempt from such ironies. We have just seen Arias berate the King for his neglect and unconcern; now we see him muddled and indecisive in his own care for the Prince for whom he apparently feels such loyalty. Soon we are to see him neglect his Prince's care altogether, as he seeks to satisfy his own importunate curiosity. In the very same scene, which in its way echoes this one, Calderón is to make him reflect on the futility of so many human attempts to remedy misfortune:

ARIAS Aquí al Infante dejemos,
y a su remedio acudamos
si hay en desdichas remedio (I:118-20)

We have heard Arias talk rashly of his support for the Prince - yet this rashness will lead him to the side of the future King. Diego upbraids him for it; yet his caution will tie him to the King's side - where he will surely be the loser.

As the play progresses, Diego comes to exemplify other aspects of Calderón's scepticism of the effectiveness of human remedies. Later in the play, when Enrique has left Sevilla to join his brother in Consuegra,(29) the King gloomily expresses his fears of their revenge. As Pedro's kingdom crumbles about him, Diego tries to offer consolation:

DIEGO Tus hermanos son,
y es forzoso que te amen
como a hermano, y como a Rey
te adoren: dos naturales
obediencias son. (III:470-4)

One is left with the image of a decent man, deeply disturbed by the horrors he sees,[30] one who makes a vain attempt to project onto a disordered world values of decency and loyalty. These are sad words, that express the vision of a world as it should be - but never can become.

Here, at the very beginning, in these apparently trivial details, we see the seeds of such a vision. It is in his mastery of small details such as these that Calderón is so often at his most impressive.

NOTES

(1) All references to edition of C. A. Jones (Oxford, 1976).

(2) The sources most familiar to Calderón's audience would be the Crónica of Pedro López de Ayala, and the relevant section of Mariana's Historia de España (in BAE, vol. 30, pp. 403-519). Both these sources are hostile to the King, and present him in an unfavourable light. For a more modern account of one aspect of King Pedro's reign of particular relevance to this play, see L. de Torre y Franco Romero, "Las bodas del Rey don Pedro I de Castilla", RABM 20 (1909), pp. 28-42, 247-62.

(3) The ballads have been collected and edited by A. Pérez Gómez, El romancero del Rey don Pedro (Valencia, 1954). Possibly the most sensational of the many plays is Claramonte's Desta agua no beberé, in BAE XLIII; others of some interest are Lope de Vega's Audiencias del Rey don Pedro (in BAE CCXII), and Enriquez Gomez, A lo que obliga el honor (in BAE XLVII). The subject has been studied by Lomba y Pedraja, 'El Rey don Pedro en el teatro' in Homenaje a Menéndez y Pelayo, II (Madrid, 1899). The vexed question of the King in El médico de su honra has been the subject of much discussion, most notably by Irvine Watson, 'Peter the Cruel or Peter the Just?', RJ 14 (1963), pp. 322-46 and D.W. Cruickshank, 'Calderón's King Pedro: Just or Unjust?' Spanische Forschungen 25 (1970), pp. 113-32. Watson is fiercely pro-Pedro, Cruickshank even more fiercely against him. For other views, see bibliography.

(4) See Watson, pp. 324-5. His suggestion is that a strong King such as Pedro (if indeed he was: for an opposing view, see Cruickshank, p. 115) would have an appeal to people living under two weak Kings like Philip III and Philip IV.

(5) This play has been edited by Menéndez y Pelayo; all references are to BAE CCXII. It is, in fact, extremely doubtful whether Lope is its real author; its date of composition is probably about 1620. See S.G. Morley and C. Bruerton, The Chronology of Lope de Vega's comedias (New York, 1940), pp. 311-2. For a detailed study of the relationship between Calderon's play and its source, see A. Sloman, The Dramatic Craftsmanship of Calderón (Oxford, 1958), pp. 18-59. Various other sources of the play have been suggested. See, for example, A. David Kossoff, 'El médico de su honra and La amiga de Bernal Francés', HR 24 (1956), pp. 66-70; and A. Sloman, 'Calderon's El médico de su honra and La amiga de Bernal Francés', BHS 39 (1957), pp. 168-9. E.M. Wilson suggests another source in his Some Aspects of Spanish Literary History (Oxford, 1967), pp. 23-5 and Appendix B.

(6) See Varey and Shergold, 'Some Early Calderón Dates', BHS 38 (1961), p. 281.

(7) Actors and actresses alike were well-known for the care they lavished on their costumes, and the extravagant lengths to which they sometimes went to appear elegant in public. This can be deduced from the lengthy, and apparently ineffectual, series of sumptuary laws designed to limit their costumes' splendour. See Shergold, History of the Spanish Stage, pp. 516ss. See also H. A. Rennert, The Spanish Stage in the time of Lope de Vega (New York, 1909), pp. 106ss. The costume of the galán one must assume to be a particularly stylish one, in the height of showy fashion. One recalls Pablos going off to pay court to his nun, dressed in "el vestido con que solía hacer los galanes en las comedias" (Quevedo, El Buscón, ed. A. Castro (Clásicos Castellanos), p. 249).

(8) The stage direction in Vera Tassis' edition reads "Suena ruido de caza", and this reading is accepted by Valbuena Briones in his edition of the play (Madrid, 1965). Characters often pretend to be hunting in Golden Age plays, but such a reading is clearly not the right one in this context.

(9) Their names are irrelevant here; Calderón does not need to give us them till later (I:34, 36).

(10) Calderón confirms these identities later on (I:83-4).

(11) Possibly the nearest historical precedent would have been the fall of the Infante Carlos, Philip II's son, down a staircase in April, 1562. He injured his head in the fall, and was subjected to a series of barbarous surgical interventions (described in graphic detail in Juan Fragoso, Cirugia Universal (Alcalá, 1592), fol. 176). His life was saved when his doctors, in despair, abandoned surgery and had recourse to prayer.

(12) It is easy to take Calderón's technical skill for granted; a glance at the same scene in the source-play makes one very much aware of it. There the presentation is laboured, the stagecraft clumsy, the verse appalling.

(13) Even so, Calderón has expanded his part, in comparison with the one he was given in the opening scene of the source-play. There, he simply strides on, asks "¿Qué ha sido?" and "¿Está muerto?" and shouts "¡Curense caballos hola!" as he leaves. Daniel Rogers calls the King "a tight-lipped autocrat" ('"Tienen los celos pasos de ladrones": Silence in Calderón's El médico de su honra' HR 33 (1965), pp. 273-89). This may be an exaggeration; Watson (p. 328) points out that Calderón has expanded the part here to show the King in a more favourable light. This may be true; on the other hand, if Calderón had really wanted to show the King in a favourable way, he could surely have done more.

(14) Much of which is to be found in Covarrubias, Tesoro de la lengua castellana 1611, ed. Riquer (Barcelona, 1944), s.v.: "es un pez pequeño, cubierto de espinas...si se opone al curso de la galera o de otro vagel le detiene sin que sean bastantes remos ni vientos para moverle...." The entry is a lengthy one, impossible to quote in full. Presumably the question as to why such a small fish could possess such strength must have interested him.

(15) A much less favourable interpretation could, of course be given; especially in the knowledge that the King's mistress, María de la Padilla, lived in Sevilla, and the King was notorious for the haste with which he travelled there to visit her. In spite of his unfaithfulness to his wife, King Pedro is also alleged to have killed her because he suspected her of being unfaithful to him. These stories seem to have an obvious relevance in the context of this play; the author of the source-play makes a reference to the King's marriage (p. 137b-138a), a reference which Calderón omits. So Calderón could easily have presented his King in a much more unfavourable light, had he so wished.

(16) Cf. his asides at III:741-5, 824-7. Possibly Calderón's most vivid presentation of the clash between the King's public persona and his feelings as a person occurs at the end of La Cisma de Ingalaterra as he tries to conceal his horror and grief at his wife's death from his subjects: "Ya la seña de la jura / hacen: quiero prevenirme / a disimularme afable / a consolado fingirme. / Aquí, valor, ayudame...." (171b). The speech is beautifully written, the whole scene wonderfully staged. A more familiar theatrical presentation of the dilemma is seen in Shakespeare's Richard II, particularly the superb speech in which Richard muses the consequences of defeat: "For you have mistook me all this while / I live with bread like you, feel want, / Taste grief, need friends...." (Act III, sc. ii). For a scholarly presentation of the dilemma's legal implications, see E. H. Kantorovicz, The King's two bodies (Princeton, 1957).

(17) Cf. I:702-808; II:421-65. The King's refusal to laugh was, of course, paralleled by the real King, Philip IV's refusal to laugh in public. This was particularly striking at palace performances of plays. See J. E. Varey, "L'auditoire du Salon Dorado de l'Alcazar de Madrid au XVIIème siècle" in Dramaturgie et Société, I (Paris, 1968), p. 80.

(18) II:486-504. A. A. Parker interprets the King's behaviour in the same way; see his Approach to the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age, Diamante no. 6 (London 1957), p. 4; Sloman agrees in op. cit., p. 42.

(19) "Entereza" was a greatly esteemed quality; King Philip II, in particular, was much admired for it. The author of the source-play tries to attach it to his King Pedro; don Álvaro comments after the King's departure "Su entereza en todas cosas / el mundo admira" (p. 116b).

(20) Cf. the entry in Autoridades on the expression "¡Vive Dios!": "expresiones de juramento y execración inconsideradamente usadas en los casos de ira o cólera, verdaderamente reprehensibles".

(21) As the King rather gloomily notes later on, "Es su privanza" (III:476).

(22) Cf. the King's fearful response to his brother's accidentally cutting his hand (III:225-46), and the gloomy songs sung in the street (III:483-9, 586-97).

(23) Las paredes oyenwas published in Alarcón's Parte primera de las Comedias in 1628. See introduction and edition by A. Reyes in Clásicos Castellanos (Comedias, Madrid, 1918); B. Varela Jácome, La verdad sospechosa... (Barcelona, 1969).

(24) Cf. Autoridades: "Refrán que enseña y amonesta al gran cuidado que se debe poner en donde y a quien se dice alguna cosa que importa que sea secreta por el riesgo que puede tener de que se publique o se sepa".

(25) Such distrust reminds one of Guzmán's paranoia: "No hallarás hombre con hombre; todos vivimos en asechanza los unos de los otros" (Mateo Alemán, Guzmán de Alfarache, ed. Gili Gaya, Clásicos Castellanos, vol. II, p. 54).

(26) The best study of this theme in the play is Daniel Rogers, '"Tienen los celos pasos de ladrones": Silence in Calderón's El médico de su honra', HR 33 (1963), pp. 273-89.

(27) In Comedias y Entremeses, ed. R. Schevill and A. Bonilla (Madrid, 1917), vol. I, p. 116. Some theatre companies employed an underling for this somewhat specialised task, the metemuertos. See Shergold, op. cit., p. 217.

(28) The author of the source-play has the worst of both worlds in this respect. Like Calderón, he has to dispose of the body; but unlike Calderón, he has the body carried on - so the Prince's entry lacks the dramatic impact of his fall in Calderón's play. It is worth noting, in the light of the discussion that follows, that the two characters involved in the source-play, don Álvaro and don Pedro, decide, in a quite straightforward fashion, simply to carry the body offstage (p. 116b).

(29) 'Consuegra' has an ominous ring. See Cruickshank, art. cit., p. 119.

(30) Cf. III:635-7. Here again, this little aside serves a double purpose; for it also covers a piece of dialogue between Ludovico and Pedro that Calderón does not want us to hear.

C H A P T E R T H R E E

"...más amante que primero..."

It is time now to turn our attention to the second of the three strands of plot that Calderón is presenting in this play. Here again, he manages to communicate the essentials with admirable directness and economy.

If we can assume that at least some members of the audience would recognise the actor playing Enrique as the galán, then we can assume, too, that the actress playing Mencía would be recognised as the dama. Every Golden Age play that was written has some love interest involving galán and dama - and so we are led to expect some kind of relationship here too.(1) It is up to Calderón, again bearing in mind that the details of the plot may well have been known, to indicate the nature of this relationship.

This is swiftly achieved. We gain almost all the information we need from Mencía's anguished and immediate recognition of Enrique:

MENCÍA (AP.) ¿Qué es esto que miro? ¡Ay cielos!

DIEGO El Infante don Enrique
hermano del Rey don Pedro... (I:82-84)

- and from Arias' astonished recognition of Mencía, his spontaneous expression of bewilderment -

ARIAS Que el Infante don Enrique
más amante que primero,
vuelva a Sevilla, y te halle
con tan infeliz encuentro,
¿puede ser verdad?

MENCÍA Sí es;
¡y ojalá que fuera sueño! (I:95-100)

This is enough to establish the fact that they have had a relationship in the past; Mencía's urgent attempts to silence Arias' importunate questioning establishes the difficulties of the present:

ARIAS Pues ¿qué haces aquí?

MENCÍA Despacio
lo sabrás; que ahora no es tiempo
sino sólo de acudir
a la vida de tu dueño.

ARIAS ¿Quién le dijera que así
llegara a verte?

MENCÍA Silencio,
que importa mucho, don Arias.

ARIAS ¿Por qué?

MENCÍA Va mi honor en ello.
Entrad en ese retiro... (I:101-9)

All this tells us just what we need to know - that Enrique and Mencía once were lovers; that Enrique has been absent, but has now returned to continue the relationship. We know too, that this is no longer possible; Mencía's honour is now called into question in a way that it was not before. Even though we are not told precisely why the relationship cannot continue, it is easy to guess that this is because Mencía has got married. Of course, a talented actress could communicate much more: she could communicate a continuing love for Enrique; she could communicate that Mencía's inability to keep up the relationship does not arise from inclination but from fear.

There is no need for long speeches here; Calderón has told it all in a short passage of emotionally charged dialogue. All that needs to be done now is to fill in the details: and that is precisely what takes place in the scenes that follow.

It is worth noting that he could have told it differently, if he wished. The author of the source-play, for instance, wrote a fairly lengthy scene between his dama, Mayor, and her servant, Elvira, in which the two of them come on stage and Mayor recounts all the relevant facts to her servant, in a fairly clumsy, if direct way:

that she is married, her husband is absent, she is unhappy with him, suspects he may be unfaithful, and that her affair with the Prince is now definitely finished with and forgotten. Calderón leaves all this to be inferred, in a much more satisfying and intense way, as the action unfolds.

But he could have followed the source-play's example, and he does bring on his dama and her servant - but the exchange they have is a very different one. Calderón clearly does not wish to exploit such a scene's possibilities for exposition of such a straightforward kind. He uses other means to achieve his exposition - and makes a very different use of the scene.

In its way, the scene that takes place between Mencía and Jacinta parallels the 'lyrical interlude' between Peribáñez and Casilda in Lope's Peribáñez: the author has gained the attention of his audience, and feels confident enough to slow the pace and indulge in a little poetry. But, unlike Lope on that occasion, Calderón does not indulge his undoubted poetic gifts simply for their own sake: they perform a very definite function as drama.

On the face of it, all Mencía is doing is describing a man riding a horse, and then falling off it. It is one of a series of descriptions and reflections on Enrique's fall. The author of the source-play has the fall take place off stage; we hear shouts of anguish, whilst someone on the stage describes what is happening.(2) Calderón had greater confidence in the acrobatic skills of his galán, and a desire to make the event more vivid - so he falls in front of our eyes. Then, he has a variety of characters describe it, make jokes about it, and react to it in differing situations. First Arias, then Diego describe it in brief, factual terms;(3) Mencía describes

it poetically.(4) Mencía talks again of the fall, and the best way for Enrique to recover from it, as she tends him.(5) Enrique himself gives two accounts of it: one describes the way he claims to have originally understood its significance, and the other how he sees it after hearing of Mencía's marriage.(6) Gutierre's first speech is taken up with a courtly rendering of his reaction to the news of it,(7) and his next big speech describes the horse he will give Enrique to replace the one that threw him.(8) This provides a cue for Coquín to make a joke about it.(9) Finally Gutierre leaves home and accompanies Enrique to Sevilla in response to it.(10)

Of course, the play's whole plot depends on it, since it is Enrique's fall that brings about his unhappy reunion with Mencía - and this is what leads to her death. It is clearly more than a mere device - it is an image that dominates the entire first half of this act.

This play is not unique in this respect. The image of a fall, particularly the fall of a rider from a runaway horse, recurs again and again in Calderón's work, and it could be traced from his earliest play, Amor, honor y poder, right through to his last, Hado y divisa de Leonido y Marfisa.(11)

So we find that his use of image spans a creative period of almost 60 years, and we find it occurring in at least 13 plays.(12) The spectacular effect of Enrique's fall onto the stage is duplicated in several of them. It is an effect he uses to begin his play El Alcaide de sí mismo - but in that play it is not simply one, but two actors whose simultaneous fall onto the stage signals the play's beginning.(13)

This indicates not only that the fall was a constant

source of interest to Calderón, a useful and interesting image for him to use, but that it was also a success with his public. It made both for an effective coup de théâtre and also created a dramatic image full of metaphorical significance.

Even a superficial glance at a dictionary reveals that the word itself is one loaded with meaning. "Autoridades" lists no fewer than 16 different accepted meanings for the word, 57 proverbial phrases in which it figures prominently, and a further 17 sentences to illustrate its figurative and idiomatic use. The word's basic definition "venir al suelo lo que estaba levantado" is one that can easily give rise to an almost infinite number of metaphorical connotations.

Given such a wealth of possible meaning, it is hard to know where to begin. Two further illustrations of its use in Calderón's work may well give us some directions we can follow.

The first comes from El pintor de su deshonra(14) a companion piece to the other two, earlier, celebrated "honour plays", El médico de su honra itself and Calderón's extraordinary black comedy A secreto agravio, secreta venganza.(15)

All these plays contain a night scene in the second act, in which the husband returns home unexpectedly whilst the ex-lover is talking with the wife. Confusion results from the attempts of the wife, and her servant, to effect a safe removal of the lover from the house. It is a stock situation from the comedias de capa y espada, as the servant in El pintor de su deshonra points out:

DON JUAN (DENTRO) ¿Cómo, habiendo anochecido,
no hay aquí luz?

FLORA ¡Mi señor!

SERAFINA ¡Muerta estoy!

DON ÁLVARO ¡Estoy perdido!

FLORA (AP) ¡Que nunca falte a este paso
galán, hermano o marido! (II:326-30)

It may well be a stock situation,(16) but Calderón makes wonderful use of it, creating scenes that are both frightening and richly comic. Fear and humour combine in an explosive mixture that eloquently portrays the darkness and confusion of the world of honour - a darkness mercilessly exposed in the broad daylight of the Madrid stage.

Part of the fun of the scene, of course, lies in wondering what ingenious scheme will be devised by mistress and servant to get the lover out of the way. In both El Médico and El Pintor, the wife uses the strategem of a wife's duty of service to her husband to prepare the ground;(17) in El Pintor, Serafina lures her husband away from the scene in the expectation that Flora will then be free to remove Álvaro. Unfortunately, she is interrupted by the arrival of the servant, Juanete. She pretends to fall and put out the light, so Álvaro can escape in the darkness. A wonderful piece of dialogue ensues:

(DÉJASE CAER FLORA Y MATA LA LUZ)

FLORA ¡Jesús mil veces!

(SALE JUANETE)

JUANETE ¿Qué es esto,
Flora?

FLORA Este es haber caído,
Juanete.

JUANETE ¿En la tentación,
o en qué?

FLORA ¿Qué sé yo en qué ha sido? (II:414-8)

It is a wonderful example of the delight Calderón takes in playing with the possibilities of language and metaphor. In a way, Álvaro

and Serafina have "fallen into temptation" - the very same temptation that Enrique and Mencía "fall into" because Enrique falls off his horse - the temptation of adultery.

Another pointer comes from a much more serious scene, one that takes place at the end of the first act of El príncipe constante.[18] The two brothers, Prince Enrique and Prince Fernando, are the leaders of an expeditionary force invading north Africa:

(TOCAN DENTRO UN CLARÍN, HAY RUIDO DE DESEMBARCAR, Y VAN SALIENDO DON FERNANDO, DON ENRIQUE, DON JUAN COUTIÑO Y SOLDADOS PORTUGUESES)

DON FERNANDO — Yo he de ser el primero, África bella,
que he de pisar tu margen arenosa
porque oprimada al peso de mi huella
sientas en tu cerviz la poderosa
fuerza que ha de rendirte.

DON ENRIQUE — Yo en el suelo
africano la planta generosa
el segundo pondré. (CAE) ¡Válgame el cielo!
Hasta aquí los agüeros me han seguido. (p. 16-7)

In a way, one almost feels sorry for Enrique; his brother gets his moment of glory, whilst a sudden stumble ruins his own. He is frightened by it; he sees this fall as one of a long series of unfavourable omens:

DON ENRIQUE — El alma traigo de temores lleno:
echada juzgo contra mi la suerte
desde que, de Lisboa al salir, sólo
imágenes he visto de mi muerte (p. 18)

- omens he interprets as presaging his own death and disgrace.

The Spanish Prince Enrique of El Médico comes to interpret his fall in the same way, as an omen of impending death:

DON ENRIQUE — ¡Ay don Arias! la caída
no fue acaso, sino agüero
de mi muerte... (I:243-5)

Perhaps we, too, are to understand it as an ominous sign of impending tragedy. For certainly it is the first of a series of premonitions, curses, omens and fearful visions.(19) Tragedy is certainly in the air - but whose?

If this were a play by Lope, one suspects the omens would be fulfilled. One thinks of the omens that warn other heroes, Don Alonso of El caballero de Olmedo;(20) even less worthy characters, like the Comendadores of Los comendadores de Córdoba are given supernatural warnings that infallibly come true.(21)

But we are far from the world of the old comedia. Both of Calderón's omen-struck victims are mistaken. It is not their own deaths that are foretold. In fact, both Enriques are on their way to kingship, perhaps even some kind of glory. The Spanish Enrique will not die, or at least not yet: his brother Pedro will die first. The Portuguese Enrique, too, will be King; it is his brother who will be taken into captivity and suffer death. The omens are misleading.(22) It is not so much a personal disaster they foretell so much as the inadequacies of secular values. In Fernando's case, what is at stake are the failures of an arrogant militarism. We would do well to take heed of his words on this occasion:

DON FERNANDO
Estos agüeros viles, miedos vanos,
para los moros vienen, que los crean,
no para que lo duden los cristianos.
Nosotros dos lo somos....
.... Si morimos,
el castigo de Dios, justo es temerle:
éste no viene envuelto en miedos vanos:
a servirle venimos, no a ofenderle;
cristianos sois, haced como cristianos. (p. 18)

He urges his co-religionists to overcome their fear and do their Christian duty. His understanding of what that duty consists of leads

him to a martyr's death. Here the resemblance ends. Mencía and Pedro cannot overcome their fear; they suffer death. Gutierre and Enrique make no attempt to follow their Christian duty; instead, they commit murder.

So we are left with a temptation, and an omen. These represent a beginning - but as the play progresses, Enrique's fall takes on other aspects, other layers of meaning.

The scene changes, as the men leave through one door and the women come on through the other. We are no longer to imagine ourselves out of doors, on the open road, but in the house within. The pace slows, the mood changes. We are no longer concerned with what happens in the outside world; our attention gets focussed on what happens within the human mind.

Outside, all was activity, all was disorder. Events moved fast, decisions had to be taken. The characters were confronted with suffering, perhaps even death. Within, all seems calm, serene, even: disorder is transmuted into poetry. Here we see the ordering of experience into its constituent elements;[23] the confusion we have just witnessed on stage, the "gran desdicha" (I:48), is transformed into a dazzling display of poetic elegance.

MENCÍA Venía
un bizarro caballero
en un bruto tan ligero,
que en el viento parecía
un pájaro que volaba (I:49-53)

The swiftness of the horse is compared to the elegant flight of a bird; the plumes the rider wears in his hat become the bright feathers of its wings. This creature, light and swift as the air, so brightly and so gaily coloured, gains in splendour from the other two elements of

earth and fire:

MENCÍA
El campo y el sol en ellas
compitieron resplandores;
que el campo le dió sus flores,
y el sol le dió sus estrellas; (I:57-60)

The colours shone in the sun and shifted like a carpet of flowers in a spring meadow. Even when the rider fell, still he retained his beauty. For if when he rode, he partook of all that was beautiful in the realm of air, in falling he partook of all that is beautiful in the element of earth. He fell, says Mencía, like a plucked rose...

MENCÍA
Corrió, pues, y tropezó
el caballo, de manera
que lo que ave entonces era,
cuando en la tierra cayó
fué rosa... (I:65-8)

Finally, Calderón has his actress complete the speech in a triumphant summing up of all the elements involved in it, in which the components of the penultimate line correspond, in inverse order, with those of the final one:

MENCÍA
Y así en rigor
imitó su lucimiento
en sol, cielo, tierra y viento,
ave, bruto, estrella y flor. (I:68-71)

The whole speech is a beautiful example of Calderón's poetic skill; in a way, it is a kind of celebration of the possibilities of language. Calderón must have taken much delight in constructing such artefacts, and his audience, too, must have taken much pleasure in hearing them. It is important to recognise this pleasure; important, too, to recognise that this is more than simply a bravura passage for actress and playwright, more than a simple showcase for their talents.

Calderón has set other forces to work, which give the speech a very different, and equally valid, dimension.

Mencía is describing what she saw as she stood in a tower.

MENCÍA
Desde la torre los vi,
y aunque quien son no podré
distinguir, Jacinta, sé
que una gran desdicha allí
ha sucedido. Venía
un bizarro caballero... (I:45-50)

This, in part, explains the extraordinary detachment of her perception. To be sure, she knows she is describing a misfortune, "una gran desdicha", but a misfortune seen from a distance. Whatever pain is involved in the fall of the rider does not seem to touch her: she only describes its elegance. She remains above it, in her tower, unaffected, seemingly detached.

Of course, the speech could have been different. Calderón could have had her witness the event at close quarters, recognise her lover, and be lamenting both his sudden reappearance and his misfortune. Instead, he has chosen to delay the moment of recognition until the next scene, when the unconscious body is brought in. It is a fine dramatic moment, that would have been spoilt entirely if she were to recognise him now.

Her non-recognition of Enrique in this "bizarro caballero" also fills the speech with irony. For we know the identity of the man involved; and even if we missed the source-play, and so do not know of Mencía's romantic involvement with Enrique, we can still guess it; and so there is indeed a deep irony in this detached, poetic, ordered relation of an event which does, in fact, touch Mencía deeply. Indeed, it will affect the course of her life: it will be the cause of her death.

So there is much to be gained for Calderón if he keeps her at a distance. So by placing her in the tower, he meets an elementary technical need: to find a device that will keep her apart, detached from what has happened. But the tower is no mere device; it is a powerful image in its own right. In Calderón, it is an image loaded with significance, a constantly recurring image of imprisonment, oppression and despair.(24)

In this particular context, it also takes on a peculiarly chivalresque connotation. The authors of so many libros de caballerías have locked their heroines in high towers, where they wait, beautiful and hapless, for some bold cavalier to organise their rescue. We are reminded of Melisendra, imprisoned in the towers of Sansueña, staring out with helpless longing across the plain to France. She is a heroine whose wait is not in vain: bullied by Charlemagne, the gallant Gaiferos gallops across the plain and carries her off to safety, and home.(25)

Of course, no-one comes to rescue poor Mencía, trapped in the tower of her marriage. Her Gaiferos may be swift, he may be elegant, he may be bold, but he does not carry her home for she is already there: instead his horse trips, he falls.

Perhaps less frivolously, we may note that Calderón makes Mencía, all unwittingly, describe her falling cavalier in terms that we can recognise as implying an adverse moral judgement. As Soons points out, Calderón often uses flowers and plumes as images of "vanity and over-reaching".(26) Flowers, in particular, are almost always associated with ideas of the transitory nature of human life - and not just in Calderón.(27) As for birds, flighty creatures, they belong to the air, that most moveable and inconstant element.(28) Men are of the earth, earthy: any attempt to leave their proper element and embark on another,

whether sea or air, was held by traditional wisdom to be a rash undertaking, almost certain to end in disaster.(29)

We could find mythological echoes in the speech, too; and on the whole these would reinforce these associations with rashness, mutability, the vanity that precedes a fall. We may be reminded of Phaethon's rash flight through the sky with the chariots of the sun.(30) Like Enrique, Phaethon was illegitimate, his flight was motivated by vain glory, by the need to prove the nobility of his descent. We are told he was both arrogant and proud, his fall a fitting punishment of his vanity.

A similar lesson is to be found in the traditional exegesis of the fall of Icarus.(31) It teaches us to avoid pride, restrain rashness and impetuosity, and not to overreach ourselves. Icarus can be seen as the prototype of the lover, his beloved the sun; so his fall becomes the tragedy of the lover seeking to approach his beloved - and dying in the attempt.(32) Enrique, "más amante que primero" (I:96), thus becomes a little Icarus, Icarillo, his fall the abrupt end of his romantic dreams.

It is also worth noting that the horse can also be interpreted as a symbol of sexual passion, the reins the symbol of the restraint of reason. When a man becomes dominated by his passion, his reason looses the reins, the horse bolts, misfortune follows.(33)

However, one must not forget that the speech is written to be spoken on stage, and not meditated upon in private. This means that we must think about it as a speech, to be spoken; for the way in which it is to be spoken gives a further key to its significance.

SALEN DOÑA MENCÍA Y JACINTA, ESCLAVA HERRADA.

MENCÍA Desde la torre los vi... (I:45)

The "los" clearly refers back to something Mencía has been saying before, such as "caballeros", for instance. So one must assume that Mencía is talking to Jacinta as they make their entrance. She comes on talking to Jacinta, and she continues to talk to her. Although Jacinta does not say a word until line 73, she remains on the stage, the audience can see her, and the speech is addressed to her. In print, it is easy to forget her presence, yet it is an important factor in the structuring of Mencía's speech.

Mencía is describing to Jacinta an event that she has witnessed, and she is justifying her interpretation of it:

MENCÍA y aunque quien son no podré
distinguir, Jacinta, sé... (I:46-7)

This current of self-justification persists throughout the speech, for Jacinta, her stage audience, does not seem particularly receptive or sympathetic.

Mencía describes her horse and rider as a bird (I:53); "Why?" asks the expression of her auditor. Mencía has to explain:

MENCÍA Y es razón que lo presumas
porque un penacho de plumas
matices al aire daba. (I:54-6)

and then she has to elaborate:

MENCÍA El campo y el sol en ellas
compitieron resplandores; (I:57-8)

But this is not enough for Jacinta, she remains unimpressed, uncomprehending, Mencía again has to justify, again has to explain:

MENCÍA que el campo le dió sus flores
y el sol le dió sus estrellas; (I:59-60)

but further explanation is obviously needed:

MENCÍA porque cambiaban de modo
y de modo relucían
que en todo al sol parecían
y a la primavera en todo. (I:61-4)

Jacinta simply does not seem to understand. Still, Mencía perseveres. Calderón has her move on, a little impatiently perhaps:

MENCÍA Corrió, pues, y tropezó (I:65)

As she completes her speech, Mencía tries to take care to justify each new step her imagery takes:

MENCÍA de manera
que lo que ave entonces era
cuando en la tierra cayó
fue rosa; y así en rigor
imitó..... (I:66-69)

But it is all in vain; Jacinta's reaction at the end shows that she has not understood:

JACINTA ¡Ay señora! En casa ha entrado...

MENCÍA ¿Quién?

JACINTA un confuso tropel
de gente.

MENCÍA ¿Mas que con él
a nuestra quinta han llegado? (I:73-6)

(SALEN DON ARIAS Y DON DIEGO, Y SACAN AL INFANTE, Y SIÉNTANLE EN UNA SILLA)

Mencía immediately makes the connection; the people who are entering the house are carrying the body of the rider she has just described. But Jacinta does not make this connection, for she has not understood what Mencía has been trying to communicate.

What we have witnessed, then, is an attempt on Mencía's part to

impose a kind of fragile order on the confusion of the event, both to impose and communicate that order. But it can only be sustained with the greatest difficulty in the face of incomprehension and isolation, and it is an order that is trampled underfoot by the 'confuso tropel' that break into the house.

Here again, Calderón is introducing us to the central preoccupations of his play. There is little purpose to be gained in condemning Mencía, here or elsewhere, as misguided, imprudent, and foolish. She is simply doing her best. If she is misunderstood here, it is of little consequence. But later, her life depends upon it; and her misunderstanding will be one cause of her death.

Unless we understand what is happening, we cannot act. Here, Mencía is standing back and trying to make sense of an event that happens before her eyes, It is not an unusual thing, this attempt to understand. Gutierre, her murderer, also tries to understand.(34) But the very instruments he uses seem to slip through his fingers. We recall his sad words to the King:

GUTIERRE no sé cómo lo diga
que no hay voz que signifique
una cosa, que no sea
un átomo indivisible. (III:83-6)

"Words strain, crack, and sometimes break, under the burden", writes Eliot.(35) But what else can we use? In his desperate attempts to re-establish order and coherence, Gutierre has recourse to one remedy that seems to offer certainty. The remedy, of course, is Death. But even that will slip through his fingers.

As for Mencía, she has no access to such terrible weapons. She can only protest her innocence.(36) But her protests are in vain; there is someone to hear, but no-one to understand.

NOTES

(1) A thorough study of the degree to which lesser dramatists of the time wrote their plays according to formula is Juana de José Prades, Teoría sobre los personajes de la comedia nueva (Madrid, 1962). Of course, often the actor playing galán and the actress playing dama represented brother and sister (Marcela and Félix, for instance, in Calderón's Casa con dos puertas); but here we know Enrique to be a Prince. Family relationship between galán and dama would therefore not figure in the audience's expectations.

(2) Ed. cit., p. 115. This was a not uncommon device. One recalls the opening of Tirso's Por el sótano y el turno, for instance, in which offstage shouts are used to represent an accident in a coach.

(3) I:3-5, 83-6.

(4) I:45-73.

(5) I:173-224.

(6) I:243-60, 261-74.

(7) I:315-44.

(8) I:427-44.

(9) I:465-78.

(10) I:495-554.

(11) Amor, honor y poder was performed in June 1623. See Valbuena Briones' edition in Calderón, Obras Completas II: Comedias (Madrid, 1960), pp. 53-88. Its title could almost serve as a sub-title for El médico de su honra; in its first scene, the Infanta Flérida falls off a horse that bolts. The event is described by a character on stage. His last play, Hado y divisa de Leonido y Marfisa was performed in the Royal Palace on 3rd March, 1680. In its opening scene, Calderón uses all the spectacular resources of the palace stage to represent Leonido's fall from his horse - that also has bolted - see ed. cit., pp. 2098-9.

(12) The most celebrated use of this image occurs in the opening scene of La vida es sueño. We also find it in: the middle of the second act of the first part of La hija del aire (ed. Gwynne Edwards (London, 1970), 1791ss); at the end of act II of Amar después de la muerte ("Sale Garcés, herido, cayendo...", Obras Completas I: Dramas, p. 369); in the second act of El acaso y el error, and its reworked version La señora y la criada ("sale cayendo Diana...", Obras Completas II, pp. 737 and 856); at the end of the first act of Las manos blancas no ofenden (the victim is carried on stage, Obras Completas II, p. 1094); at the beginning of Act I of

El Conde Lucanor ("Dentro, ruido de caza, y sale después, como cayendo, Ptolomeo, Soldán de Egipto....", Obras Completas II, p. 1958); half way through the first act of Agradecer y no amar ("Cae al tablado Lisardo...", Obras Completas II, p. 1380); at the end of Act I of Afectos de odio y amor ("Sale Cisterna cayendo...", Obras Completas II, p. 1766); in Act II of El Castillo de Lindabridis ("Sale Febo, atravesando el teatro de un lado a otro en un caballo. FEBO: Hipógrifo desbocado....", Obras Completas II, p. 2072). The survey is doubtless incomplete; but it does indicate the durability and popularity of the image both with Calderón and his public.

(13) Obras Completas II, p. 804.

(14) Ed. by Valbuena Briones in Calderón Dramas de honor, II (Madrid, 1956).

(15) Also ed. by Valbuena Briones in Calderón Dramas de honor, I (Madrid, 1956).

(16) "(la dama) soluciona el problema con un rasgo de ingenio y audacia, de los que hay por centenares en nuestras comedias", Juana de José Prades, op. cit., p. 82.

(17) Cf. El pintor de su deshonra, II:397-481; El médico de su honra, II:220-382. Of course, the scenes do not quite match; Calderón needs to give his audience a certain variety. For the equivalent scene in A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, see. II:645-881.

(18) Ed. A. A. Parker (Cambridge, 1968).

(19) Leonor's curse at the end of Act I (I:1007-20); Mencía's fearful vision of Enrique as her murderer (II:93-115); Mencía's fears as she sees the dagger under Gutierre's cloak (II:363-5) and when, for once, he drops the mask of self-control (II:1025-6); the King's foretelling of his death when Enrique cuts his hand (III:235-46); Mencía's vision of her death, as Gutierre writes out her death sentence (III:439-41); the prophetic songs the King hears in the street (III:481-5, 586-9); Gutierre's apocalyptic description of Mencía's corpse (III:815-9). Enrique's fall from his horse is rather crudely interpreted as an omen by don Álvaro in the source-play: "Ruego al cielo que este agüero / no anuncie, entre oscuras sombras, / que te traen presentes penas / aquellas pasadas glorias." (116b).

(20) Ed. I. I. MacDonald (Cambridge, 1971); Alonso is warned by a "Sombra" that answers to his own name (2254-2300), by a "labrador" that sings of his death before it occurs (2371-2425).

(21) Ed. Menéndez y Pelayo, in BAE, vol. 215, pp. 3-61. Don Jorge tries to draw his sword in defence of a friend, and it sticks in the scabbard; don Luis looks in the mirror, and it cracks; they have appalling dreams; dogs howl ominously (ed. cit., pp. 45b-47a). This is a powerful play that has not received the critical attention it deserves. A useful study can be found in D. Larson, The Honour Plays of Lope de Vega (Harvard, 1977), pp. 38-54.

(22) Of course, this is a favourite trick of Calderón's. Famous examples of false and misleading prophecies can be found in El mayor monstro los celos (ed. E.W. Hesse (Madison, 1955), 127-33) and La vida es sueño (ed. cit. 708-25).

(23) See E.M. Wilson's article, 'The Four Elements in the Imagery of Calderón', MLR 31 (1936), pp. 34-47.

(24) See A. A. Parker, "Metáfora y símbolo en la interpretación de Calderón" in Actas del Primer Congreso de hispanistas (Oxford, 1964), pp. 143-4. For Gwynne Edwards, imprisonment is a key image in this play, and in Calderonian tragedy as a whole. See his The Prison and the Labyrinth (Cardiff, 1978), pp. 60-85.

(25) The story is originally taken from the Romancero; undoubtedly it is told most entertainingly in Cervantes, Don Quijote, part II, chapter 26; ed. Ricquer (Barcelona, 1968), pp. 730ss. A striking modern treatment of the same theme is Lorca's fine poem, "La Monja Gitana" (from Romancero Gitano; in his Obras Completas (Madrid, 1967), p. 433).

(26) See C.A. Soons, 'The convergeance of Doctrine and Symbol in El médico de su honra', RF 72 (1960), p. 371. The image is used extensively in this sense in Calderón's auto La cena del rey Baltasar (Ed. A. Valbuena Prat, Clásicos Castellanos). See, for example, these lines of Idolatría: "Yo con el bello penacho / de las plumas que tejió / la Vanidad, escogidas / de la rueda del pavón / te haré aire....." (953-7).

(27) The image was commonplace. A wonderful example is Góngora's poem "Aprended, flores, de mi" (in Poems, selected and edited by R. O. Jones (Cambridge, 1966), p. 127). In Calderón, possibly the most celebrated example is the beautiful sonnet in El Príncipe Constante ("éstas, que fueron pompa y alegría", ed. cit., pp. 56-7).

(28) Cf. Góngora, Soledad, II:141-3 (ed. Damaso Alonso (Madrid, 1956)).

(29) Cf. Góngora, Soledad, I:19-21, 366-502; and the description of the Portuguese Armada in El Príncipe Constante, p. 9.

(30) See Ovid, Metamorphoses, I:747-779; II:1-400; Pérez de Moya, Philosophia Secreta (Madrid, 1929) ("Los Clásicos Olvidados", vols. VI and VII), XXI, 192.

(31) Metamorphoses, VIII:180-241; Moya, II:151; J. H. Turner, Icarus in the Spanish Lyrics, Unpublished Thesis (Harvard University, 1972), p. 41; Soledad, I:1009, II:137-43.

(32) Cf. Enrique's dramatisation of the event in I:253-60.

(33) See A. Valbuena Briones, 'El simbolismo en el teatro de Calderón: la caída del caballo', RF 74 (1962), pp. 60-76; J.E. Varey, 'La campagne dans le théâtre espagnol au XVIIème siècle', in in Dramaturgie et société, vol. I (Paris 1968), p. 60; Soons, art. cit., p. 37; Gwynne Edwards, 'Calderón's La hija del aire in the Light of its Sources', BHS 43 (1966), p. 188 and n. 1. The horse is a Platonic symbol of sensuous passion or libido, used by Plato in his Phaedrus; see Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries in in the Renaissance (London, 1968), p. 145 and n. 15, who discusses it in the context of Titian's use of the symbol in his Sacred and Profane Love.

(34) This is one starting point in Gutierre's famous monologue in Act II; and he begins it by expressing the incredible difficulty of reducing to order the emotional chaos within him (II:565-72). I think, too, it is helpful to interpret Mencía's monologue in Act I (I:121-54) along similar lines (see below); and, of course, her speech to Enrique later in the Act (I:405-24) is an attempt to help Enrique make sense of what has happened.

(35) In his Four Quartets, "Burnt Norton", Section V.

(36) "Inocente muero" (III:640).

C H A P T E R F O U R

"ya he quedado sola..."

Mencía's opening speech, then, is an attempt to impose a kind of order on a confused event. The attempt founders on the incomprehension of a servant; then it is dealt a further blow by the entrance of the "confuso tropel" (I:74) bearing Enrique's unconscious body. As they shuffle across the stage under the weight of their load, a burden of physical suffering intrudes into the world of poetry. Significantly, its entrance is justified by the prerogative of blood:

DIEGO — En las casas de los nobles
tiene tan divino imperio
la sangre del Rey, que ha dado
en la vuestra atrevimiento
para entrar desta manera. (I:77-81)

Here, the demands of blood do no more than break the rules of social decorum. But we are witnessing the beginnings of a sinister process; for this brusque entrance initiates a chain of events that leads to an innocent woman's death, carried out in response to the quasi-divine demands - "tan divino imperio" - of a bloodstained honour. As Gutierre will remind us, it is blood that also washes honour clean (III:891).

Mencía, of course, recognises her former lover at once; in her initial reactions, we watch a powerful private grief struggling to find an acceptable public expression:

MENCÍA (AP) — ¿Qué es esto que miro? ¡Ay cielos!

DIEGO — El Infante Don Enrique,
hermano del Rey don Pedro,
'a vuestras puertas cayó,
y llega aquí medio muerto.

MENCÍA — ¡Válgame Dios, qué desdicha! (I:82-7)

In contrast to the earlier aside (I:82), here the private grief of the lover can be acceptably expressed as the public grief of a loyal subject. It soon becomes apparent, however, that the demands of Mencía's private

emotions cannot be so easily reconciled with her public obligations. The emotional demands of the past soon come into conflict with the social, moral and religious requirements of the present. This conflict between the two spheres of Mencía's life is to provide the main focus of dramatic tension right up to Enrique's departure from the stage at I:494. In a wider sense, it is clearly one of the main foci of Calderón's interest throughout the play.

This conflict immediately emerges here from the stagecraft of Arias' entrance. Mencía must stand at the front of the stage, from where she has been delivering her speech. Diego and Arias enter at the back, and put Enrique down: "siéntanle en una silla" (SD I:76). Diego comes forward to deliver his lines (I:77-86). Arias remains with his back turned to Mencía, presumably intent on his master's body; it is only when he, too, moves forward that he recognises Mencía. His formal speech breaks off, and the exchange suddenly moves to a different level:

ARIAS Decidnos a qué aposento
podrá retirarse, en tanto
que vuelva al primero aliento
su vida. ¿Pero qué miro?
¡Señora!

MENCÍA ¡Don Arias!

ARIAS Creo
que es sueño fingido cuanto
estoy escuchando y viendo. (I:88-94)

Arias expresses his amazement in rather commonplace terms; Calderón is making use of something of a cliché,(1) but he does not allow us to accept it unthinkingly. He has Mencía transform it in a beautifully expressive way:

ARIAS ¿Qué el Infante don Enrique,
más amante que primero,
vuelva a Sevilla, y te halle
con tan infeliz encuentro,
puede ser verdad?

MENCÍA Sí es;
¡y ojalá que fuera sueño! (I:95-100)

Arias and Mencía do not altogether understand each other. If we are to understand, we need to reflect for a moment on the nature of dreaming.

Of course, the strangest things can happen in dreams. This is what Arias means; it is so strange, their meeting here. So he is eager to find out how it has come about:

ARIAS ¿Pues qué haces aquí? (I:101)

Mencía wishes it were a dream for very different reasons. She does not yearn for strangeness, but for a kind of irresponsibility: she does not wish to face the consequences of her past. This is understandable, for these consequences are both painful and dangerous. But whatever may happen in a dream, one thing we know for sure is that when we wake up the dream will be no longer there. Any action we may have taken in the course of it will fade away and come to nothing. So the dream becomes an image of life's futility. Segismundo cries out in agony when he wakes up in his prison and is told that he only dreamt himself King. Since all of life is dreams, he declares in his famous monologue, none of it has any consequence:

SEGISMUNDO en el mundo, en conclusión,
todos sueñan lo que son,
aunque ninguno lo entiende.....
¿Qué es la vida? Un frenesí.
¿Qué es la vida? Una ilusión,
una sombra, una ficción,
y el mayor bien es pequeño;
que toda la vida es sueño,
y los sueños sueños son. (2176-87)(2)

But dreaming can have its advantages, as Segismundo somewhat cynically comes to realise later on in the play:

SEGISMUNDO Rosaura está en mi poder
su hermosura el alma adora.
Gocemos, pues, la ocasión;...
Esto es sueño; y pues lo es
soñemos dichas agora... (2958-65)

The temptation is to act as if life were a dream, to act irresponsibly according to the desires of the moment without regard to the consequences. If Enrique's arrival really were part of a dream it, too, could be a pleasant one; it could at least avoid what the real situation brings in the way of pain.

A sad irony lies at the heart of Mencía's situation. We may recall the sad song of the young girl who dreamt her lover had returned, and with him all her long lost happiness. When she woke, she realised with grief that it had, after all, been only a dream:

Soñaba yo que tenía
alegre mi corazón
mas a la fe, madre mía
que los sueños, sueños son. (3)

If poor Mencía, trapped in her tower, ever dreamed of her lover's return, she now wishes her dream had remained one, wishes it had never come true.

So whilst Arias is eager to bring everything to light, Mencía is eager to bury it all in silence. For now she is married; she must try to come to terms with her real situation. The dream must remain unfulfilled.

The first step is to silence Arias. In a way, he is functioning as our mouthpiece here. After all, he has just told us that Enrique is still in love with Mencía, "más amante que primero" - indeed, even

more "in love" than before - but what of Mencía? Like any gossip, we want to know more; and Arias interrogates her with increasing insistence and extraordinary bluntness. But each question is deftly parried:

ARIAS ¿Pues qué haces aquí?

MENCÍA Despacio
lo sabrás; que ahora no es tiempo
sino sólo de acudir
a la vida de tu dueño.

ARIAS ¿Quién le dijera que así
llegara a verte?

MENCÍA Silencio,
que importa mucho, don Arias.

ARIAS ¿Por qué?

MENCÍA Va mi honor en ello.
Entrad en ese retiro.... (I:101-110)

There are several tantalising openings here; Mencía, under increasing pressure, closes each one of them. But that last admission must sound a reluctant one; it discloses more than it hides. The information we receive - for it confirms that Mencía is married - does not come in the form of hard facts. All is conveyed by suggestion, innuendo, by the expression in the actors' faces, the tone of their voices, and the expectation of the audience. This is no accident, of course; as we shall see, it is central to the play's vision of the world.

Mencía's invocation of her honour achieves its immediate purpose. Arias is silenced; and after a short pause, Mencía is able to bring the conversation back to an impersonal level as she organises the dispositions for Enrique and effectively removes Arias, Diego and Jacinta, the unwelcome witnesses of her emotions.

Her honour does more than silence Arias; it demands that she keep silent too. Enrique rests insensible at the back of the stage,

but otherwise she is alone. Now that he has her alone on stage, Calderón can explore the confines of this silence. The presence of others is one restraint; but it soon becomes clear that she is forced to live with other, deeper restraints of a much harsher kind:

MENCÍA Ya se fueron, ya he quedado
sola: ¡o quién pudiera, ah cielos,
con licencia de su honor
hacer aquí sentimientos! (I:121-4)

More than mere social convention is involved here. Calderón is making it clear that he is not presenting us with a simple case of hypocrisy. He is not portraying a woman prepared to indulge feelings in private that she conceals in public.

For since Mencía is alone, one might think her free to speak. Yet the constraints run deeper. They are not merely constraints upon her tongue; they are also constraints upon her heart. Here, we find the answers to our earlier question. Calderón makes it clear that Mencía once cared deeply for Enrique, that his unexpected return has revived a deep emotion that she thought was forgotten. Yet she dare not express this feeling, or avow it as her own. The old image of love as an icy fire is transformed; the fire of passion is extinguished by the ice of social restraint. Mencía's words paint a vivid picture of a blighted emotional landscape:

MENCÍA ¡O quién pudiera dar voces
y romper con el silencio
cárceles de nieve, donde
está aprisionado el fuego,
que ya, resuelto en cenizas,
es ruina que está diciendo:
'Aquí fue amor'. (I:125-31)

The fire of sexuality is precariously contained within the icy prison of chastity and decorum. The image carries more than a hint

of danger. One reference may be to Etna, where the fiery lava burning amidst the fields of snow at the summit was evidence of the menace of the giant imprisoned, according to legend, within the bowels of the mountain.(4) Certainly the speech conveys a sense of long-repressed emotions bubbling up to the surface; it reaches its climax at the anguished cry of 'Aquí fue amor'; there is a pause, the actress weeps, and then, abruptly, control is re-established. Mencía "pulls herself together" and becomes "herself" again:

MENCÍA ¿Mas qué digo?
¿Qué es esto, cielos, qué es esto?
Yo soy quien soy. (I:131-3)

But who is she? We can perhaps see at least three Mencías: Mencía, a woman trying to be virtuous, Mencía a woman who is married, Mencía a woman who is confronted with a past that is both dubious and cherished... these three make demands that are not always easily reconciled.

Her emotional situation is fraught with anguish. Up to line 131, Calderón has been presenting us with an image of this anguish; now he gives us an insight into how it may, perhaps, be healed. The fire that at the beginning of the speech was seen as a threat that could lay waste and consume, is to be transformed into a purifying flame. It burns in an alchemical furnace and it will, Mencía hopes, bring about the perfection of her self.

The process is not without its ironies. Mencía takes her stand in her "self" - "yo soy quien soy" and yet as a result is driven to drastic self-denial:

MENCÍA Ya, con más acuerdo
ni para sentir soy mía; (I:138-9)

This extraordinary denial of even her own right to feel would perhaps have sounded less shocking in the context of its time. If a woman's role was recognised as having any value at all, it was conceived as one essentially subjugated to the needs of the woman's husband. Outside marriage, of course, there was no place for a respectable woman in society at all - other than in the cloister, to be a bride even there: the spiritual bride of Christ. Contemporary concern about the status and position of women is clearly evidenced in the numerous treatises published on the subject, and the popularity of the figure of the rebellious female bandit on the stage. One can easily detect a similar concern in Calderón's work, an awareness of the injustice of woman's position in society, and a sympathetic interest in women who attempt to take control over their own lives.(5) As we begin to explore the ways in which this concern is expressed through the figure of Mencía in this play, it may be helpful to explore her understanding of her role as a wife in the context of some of the ideas current in Calderón's time.

The most celebrated of all the tracts that were written on the subject is Fray Luis de León's La perfecta casada.(6) Mencía expresses the idea that she is no longer free to feel for herself; the implication is that her own feelings must be subordinated to the demands of another. Fray Luis stressed that the duty of the wife was to minister to her husband's emotional needs; so that the husband would find, in his perfect wife, a fitting companionship in all his moods:

> "en la alegría tiene en ella compañía dulce, con quien acrecentará su gozo comunicándolo, y en la tristeza amoroso consuelo, y en las dudas consejo fiel, y en los trabajos regalo, y en las faltas socorro, y medecina en las enfermedades..." (p. 247-8)

Of all the virtues that the good wife must possess, the most important (and in this context, the most significant) is the virtue of chastity:

> "el ser honesta una mujer...es como el sujeto sobre el cual todo este edificio se funda,...es como el ser y la substancia de la casada..." (p. 249)

Chastity, then, must lie at the heart of the perfect wife's conduct; indeed, it should permeate her whole being. It is not enough for the perfect wife simply to act in a chaste manner, she must be chaste through and through. This entails a constant vigilance against unchaste thoughts:

> "ramo de deshonestidad es en la mujer casta el pensar que puede no serlo..." (p. 250)

Fray Luis can hardly find words black enough to describe the woman who freely admits to, and takes pleasure in, her sexuality:

> "no es ya mujer, sino alevosa ramera y vilísimo cieno, y basura la más hedionda de todo y la más despreciada." (p. 249)

All this may help us appreciate the desperate anxiety Calderón makes Mencía express at this point. For, given that chastity is the foundation of the good wife's conduct, failure to achieve it strikes at the heart of her identity. Fray Luis goes further, and describes it as a serious breakdown in the rational order of the world:

> "el quebrar la mujer a su marido la fe es perder las estrellas su luz y caerse los cielos, y quebrantar sus leyes la naturaleza y volverse todo en aquella confusión antigua y primera." (p. 251)

So that when Gutierre comes to describe the corpse of the wife he has taken to be faithless in terms borrowed from the Apocalypse -

GUTIERRE deslucidas las estrellas
y las esferas borradas (III:818-9)

- in the context of such values, he need not necessarily be indulging in empty hyperbole.

What we are watching in this moment, then, as we listen to Mencía's speech, is a struggle between Mencía and her own feelings, feelings she is desperately afraid to feel, for they strike at the heart of her identity. Yet to deny them is also, in a more human way, to deny her authentic self, and she is soon to become caught up in a web of deceit which undermines her utterly. Her cry "toda soy una ilusión" (II:368) is a natural consequence of the process that begins at "ni para sentir soy mía".(7)

Of course, one of the virtues of the sacrament of marriage is that it was held to make husband and wife into one body;(8) however disunited Gutierre and Mencía become in respect to each other, in this respect we find them in a somewhat sinister unity. For later in the play, Calderón presents us with Mencía's husband confronted with precisely the same guilts and fears as Mencía herself, and engaged in precisely the same struggle against his own feelings. Gutierre, too, is inhibited by those who surround him, unable to express the feelings within him:

GUTIERRE ¿Podré ya quejarme? Sí;
pero consolarme, no.
Ya estoy solo, ya bien puedo
hablar. (II:564-6)

His inhibitions, like Mencía's, are not simply confined to his relations with the world outside; they extend within. He, too, feels forbidden from admitting, even to himself, the existence of his deepest feelings. Like Mencía, when these feelings eventually, in spite of

himself, find their expression, he tries in vain to stifle them:[9]

GUTIERRE ¿Celos dije?
¡Qué mal hice! Vuelva, vuelva
al pecho la voz... (III:677-9)

"Vuelva al pecho la voz", "Vuelva el aire / los repetidos acentos" (I:133-4) - but it is too late. The word has been spoken. Up to here, there is an identity between oppressor and oppressed. But now their paths divulge. Gutierre's word was "celos", and it gives rise to images of self-poisoning:

GUTIERRE Si es ponzoña que engendra
mi pecho, si no me dio
la muerte, ¡ay de mi!, al verterla,
al volverla a mi podrá;
que de la víbora cuentan
que la mata su ponzoña
si fuera de sí la encuentra. (II:680-6)

Mencía's word was "amor"; it gives rise to images of self-purification:

MENCÍA no hay virtud
sin experiencia. Perfeto
está el oro en el crisol,
el imán en el acero,
el diamante en el diamante,
los metales en el fuego:
y así mi honor en sí mismo
se acrisola... (I:144-52)

On one level, this represents a sincere attempt at self-purification, an attempt to overcome the temptation that Enrique represents. He is a danger to her virtue; she hopes this danger can be successfully transmuted into a source of its triumph. As Paterson has recently pointed out,[10] the references are alchemical. Besides their straightforward significance, words like "virtud" and "experiencia" have a double meaning. "Virtud" refers both to her chastity, and is also a technical term for the "occult quality" of any metal; "experiencia"

refers to the fact that her honour is being put to the test, and also to the "laboratory operation" by which the mineral, or metal, is purified and refined.(11) Her virtue will be tested and purified by the challenge it now faces, in the same way as gold is tested and purified by the alchemist in the fire. Paterson quotes the authority of Pérez de Vargas, an experienced smelter:

> "(el fuego) es elemento tan fuerte, que buelve las cosas en ceniza, y en aire y humo, sólo el oro se le defiende, quedando más purificado y limpio" (12)

The impurity of Mencía's love for Enrique has turned to ash (I:129) - so the flame will now purify the gold of her virtue. Purified steel is attracted by the lodestone; and the diamond, hardest of all precious stones, can only be cut and brought to perfection by another diamond. Metals, too, were purified and brought to perfection through the operation of fire, by means of the process known to metallurgists as "beneficio". Her virtue will, in the biblical phrase, be "refined in the furnace of affliction"(13) until it is brought to a perfection it would not otherwise achieve.

So her virtue will be strengthened by the resolute resistance to the temptation that Enrique represents. In theory, then, such a virtuous resolution should draw her away from him and lead her to reject him. Instead she is drawn towards him. The inner struggle could be emphasised by the irresolute movements of the actress on stage; in her speech, we can hear her being irresistibly attracted towards him. The speech gains emotional momentum and culminates, not in rejection, but in an anguished calling to her lover, calling him to bring him back to life:

MENCÍA y así mi honor en sí mismo
se acrisola, cuando llego (14)
a vencerme, pues no fuera
sin experiencias perfeto.
¡Piedad, divinos cielos!
¡Viva callando, pues callando muero!
¡Enrique! ¡Señor! (I:149-55)

This paradox is explained by the fact that Calderón's carefully chosen set of images work in two contrary directions. On the one hand, as we have seen, they express a call for rejection; on the other, they sanction and rationalise Mencía's positive, caring feelings for Enrique. So they call for acceptance.

The gold-smelter's furnace, the lodestone, the diamond and the metal-worker's fire all represent the means by which Mencía's virtue is tested and purified. In other words, they stand for Enrique; and in this light, a new set of meanings emerge. For fire and gold, like Enrique and Mencía, have a hidden sympathy, in Quevedo's words a "sólida amistad",(15) a powerful mutual attraction - like the steel to the lodestone. This attraction is a common image for sexual attraction.(16) Significantly enough, Nieremberg, one of the authorities quoted by Paterson, describes the attraction between the two substances in specifically sexual terms - as "cariño", "cópula", "ósculo y abrazo", attraction "como una esposa a los brazos del esposo".(17) If Mencía is to be the steel, Enrique the magnet, she cannot prevent herself being drawn to him. The virtuous wife was commonly compared to a precious diamond;(18) as such, she may be immune to assault, yet will not be able to resist the diamond constancy of her lover.(19) It was told, too, that if two diamonds rub together, they become indissolubly joined.(20) Her virtue may be as rigid, and as strong as the finest metal - yet metal, heated in the fire of passion, becomes malleable, soft, amenable to the lover's will.

For all the conventional morality of her avowed intentions, then, Mencía's images, and her actions, lead her in a different direction from the one she intends to take.(21) Her sense of morality, her sense of what is fitting, impel her in one direction - away from Enrique; but her feelings, for all that they remain unacknowledged, impel her in another. They lead her to Enrique. And so he wakes; and Mencía's ambiguous resolve is put to the test.

NOTES

(1) Cf., for example, don Lope's reactions to an unexpected meeting with an old friend in Calderón's A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, I: 58.

(2) For convenience sake, I am only referring to one aspect of a highly complex dramatic moment. All Segismundo's conclusions here are based on false premises, for he is the victim of a deceit practised on him by Astolfo and Basilio. E.M. Wilson points out other dimensions of the dream image in his 'On La vida es sueño' in Bruce Wardropper (ed.), Critical Essays on the Theatre of Calderón (New York, 1965), p. 73.

(3) See Dámaso Alonso and José Blecua, Antología de poesía de tipo tradicional (Madrid, 1956), no. 198; Correas, Vocabulario de refranes, ed. M. Mir (Madrid, 1906), p. 466. The song was obviously popular, and there is a clear echo of it in the closing lines of Segismundo's famous monologue (La vida es sueño, 2186-7). See also E.M. Wilson and Jack Sage, Poesías líricas en las obras dramáticas de Calderón (London, 1964), no. 172 (though unfortunately the relevant page is missing in the 1964 edition).

(4) According to legend, the head of the giant Tiraeus is imprisoned under Etna, and the fire of the volcano is his breath. See Pérez de Moya, Philosophia secreta, ed. Gómez Baquero, I (Madrid, 1928), pp. 83 and 88.

(5) See Malveena McKendrick's important study, Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age (London, 1974). It seems clear that the position of women was one of Calderón's major concerns; this is most clearly expressed in his fascinating play Las armas de la hermosura (in Obras completas, I, pp. 939-83: see A.A. Parker, 'History and Poetry: the Coriolanus Theme in Calderón', in Studies for I. Gonzalez Llubera (Oxford, 1959), pp. 211-24). One can also see it reflected in his creation of characters such as Cenobia in La gran cenobia (in Obras completas, I, pp. 69-102) Semíramis in La hija del aire (ed. Gwynne Edwards (London, 1970)), Julia in La devoción de la cruz (ed. S.F. Wexler (Salamanca, 1966)) and, of course, Rosaura in La vida es sueño - all women who step outside the confines of their traditional role. Characters such as Mencía in El médico de su honra, and Leonor in No hay cosa como callar (ed. A. Valbuena Briones, Clásicos castellanos) remain within it - and Calderon is clearly sympathetic to them in the sufferings that result.

(6) Ed. P. Félix García, O.S.A., in Luis de León, Obras completas castellanas (Madrid, 1951), pp. 233-342. Fray Luis' book was first published in 1583; it went through 9 editions before 1635. Some of its ideas were dramatised by Cubillo de Aragón in his play of the same title to be found in BAE XLVII. See E. Cotarelo y Mori, 'Álvaro Cubillo de Aragón', BRAE 5 (1918), pp. 3-23, 241-80.

(7) Enrique has come to see Mencía without her knowledge or consent. Gutierre unexpectedly arrives. Mencía tries to clear herself by pretending to have found a man in her house (which there is); Gutierre searches the house, and finds a dagger by the bed. He suspects Mencía, but pretends to have found nothing (in terms of Mencía's innocence, there is nothing to find); he moves forward to embrace Mencía and bid her farewell. But he hides a dagger under his cloak; Mencía sees it, believes for a moment that Gutierre is about to kill her. Gutierre reassures her and pretends that nothing is wrong, that he bears her no ill will (when in fact he does). The scene is superbly written, richly comic and deeply sad; Calderón lays bare layer after layer of misunderstanding and deceit in a manner both ruthless and curiously compassionate.

(8) Some implications of this idea are explored with devastating irony in I:550-4. It was a commonplace, most succinctly expressed by Lotario in Cervantes' El curioso impertinente: "y tiene fuerza y virtud este milagroso sacramento (del matrimonio) que hace que dos diferentes personas sean una mesma carne", Don Quijote, I, chap. 33; ed. Riquer, p. 337.

(9) It is not merely his feelings of jealousy that Gutierre seeks to stifle; having resolved on murder, his feelings of compassion must be buried as well. See, for example, III:408-9.

(10) A.K.G. Paterson, 'The Alchemical Marriage in Calderón's El médico de su honra', RJ 30 (1979), pp. 263-82.

(11) Paterson, art. cit., pp. 277ss.

(12) De re metalica (Madrid, 1569), 29r.

(13) Isaiah 48.10.

(14) NB "cuando", with its implication that the struggle is continuing; victory has not been won.

(15) Obras completas:prosa (Madrid, 1943), 1222a, quoted by Paterson, art. cit., p. 277.

(16) Ibn Ḥazm of Córdoba uses it in his 11th century treatise on love, Ṭauq al-ḥamāma (translated by García Gómez under the title El Collar de la Paloma (Madrid: Alianza, 1967), p. 104), so the image has a long ancestry. One use of it by Calderón can be found in Casa con dos Puertas, in Obras Completas, II, p. 276a.

(17) Nieremberg, Curiosa y oculta filosofía (Madrid, 1643), 135r; quoted by Paterson, art. cit., p. 277.

(18) Cf. Cervantes, El curioso impertinente, in Don Quijote, I,33, p. 335; and Lope de Vega, Peribáñez, I:347.

(19) Cf. Calderón, A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, I:635-47. Honour, too, was commonly compared to a diamond; see, for example, in the same play I:213.

(20) "frissando un diamante con otro, adquieren calor, y se juntan con tal suerte que con dificultad se pueden desapegar", Gaspar de Morales, Libro de las virtudes y propriedades maravillosos de las piedras preciosas (Madrid, 1605), 138r. Quoted by Paterson, art. cit., p. 277.

(21) It could be argued that Calderón is thus aware of, and expressing, the intention of his character's unconscious mind. See B.W. Wardropper, 'The Unconscious Mind in Calderón's El pintor de su deshonra', HR 18 (1950), pp. 285-301.

C H A P T E R F I V E

"fénix de su misma fama..."

Mencía calls; Enrique wakes. Now follow the first speaking lines that Enrique has been given, the first real opportunity the actor has to establish himself as a character, and begin to communicate what kind of person he represents. A producer now has to overcome the problem posed by the fact that both situation and character are unfamiliar to a modern audience, whilst the scene was actually written under very different circumstances. For in the first performance, both dramatist and autor could count on the audience's familiarity with a long tradition, in which this scene had been played and re-played many times.

Plays abounded in which a wife's virtue was tested by the persistent attentions of a lover of higher social status.(1) Such scenes were themselves a reflection of a much older tradition, which finds perhaps its most celebrated popular expression in the Romance de la bella mal maridada. This haunting poem is worth quoting in full:

"La bella mal maridada
de las lindas que yo vi,
véote triste, enojada,
la verdad dila tú a mí.
Si has de tomar amores,
vida, no dejes a mí,
que a tu marido, señora,
con otro mujer lo ví,
y besando y abrazando
mucho mal dice de ti;
y juraba y perjuraba
que te había de ferir."
Allí habló la señora,
allí habló, dijo así:
"Sáquesme tú, el caballero,
y sacásesme de aquí,
por las tierras donde fueres
bien te sabré yo servir."
Ellos en aquesto estando,
su marido véislo aquí. (2)

This extraordinarily powerful, and very popular, romance contains many of the elements to be found in this play. The beautiful wife is unhappy

in her marriage (I:555-74), the husband is suspected of unfaithfulness (I:514-5), the lover comes from distant lands (I:49ss). The lover is a source of temptation; in both poem and play, tension arises from the question of how far the wife will resist this temptation to adultery, and whether the husband will discover the wife and lover together. These are the questions the audience will be asking themselves as they watch this scene. In the ballad, the presence of the husband is a source of danger; and the poem closes on an ominous note.(3)

Of course, lover, wife and husband, besides being figures from the world of the romancero, also firmly belong to the tradition of courtly love. Enrique almost consciously at times evokes a tradition in which adulterous love represented the height of the lovers' experience.(4) In his self-pity, his persistence and his rejection of the values of conventional morality, Enrique is a kind of debased Macías, that prototype of the courtly lover, subject of one of Lope's best-known plays, whose title could be taken as his motto: Porfiar hasta morir.(5) It is a motto that Enrique is to take over, and unconsciously parody, towards the close of the first act:

ENRIQUE tengo de porfiar
hasta morir, o vencer. (I:1005-6)

It is worth noting that Lope also wrote a dramatised version of La bella mal maridada;(6) a more skilfully written example of the many instances of this kind of scene occurs in the first act of Peribáñez, in which the newly wedded Casilda is left alone with the unconscious Comendador. Like Enrique, he has fallen off his horse; like Mencía - though for very different reasons - Casilda feels grief at this event. Lope gives her a monologue in which she expresses this grief; at the end of it, like Mencía, she calls to him, and he wakes:

CASILDA ¡Ah señor Comendador!

COMENDADOR ¿Quién llama? ¿Quién está aquí?

CASILDA ¡Albricias, que habló!

COMENDADOR ¡Ay de mí!
¿Quién eres?

CASILDA Yo soy, señor.
No os aflijáis; que no estáis
donde no os desean más bien
que vos mismo... (I:304-12)

It can easily be seen that Calderón has not only borrowed the situation, but many of the words and phrases Lope used in his treatment of it. As soon as they wake up, both Comendador and Enrique begin mouthing compliments. Enrique compares Mencía to an angel, and decides he must be in heaven:

ENRIQUE es fuerza que sea gloria
donde vive ángel tan bello. (I:189-90)

This is a simple restatement of the Comendador's words:

COMENDADOR es justo pensar que sea
cielo donde un hombre vea
que hay ángeles como vos.

Lope's Casilda silences this beautifully:

CASILDA Antes por vuestras razones
podría yo presumir
que estáis cerca de morir.

COMENDADOR ¿Cómo?

CASILDA Porque veis visiones (I:324-7)

Mencía, too, tries to silence Enrique with a (rather more elaborate) play on images of death and resurrection.(7) Like Mencía, Casilda is embarrassed by the man's ignorance of her marital status, and by the

compliments that this ignorance gives rise to; like Enrique, the Comendador is furious and discomfited when he discovers, almost by accident, that his "ángel" is, in fact, a married one.

So Calderón is not handling new or unfamiliar material[8] so much as creating variations on a familiar theme. His problem is that his audience, being on such familiar ground, may become bored or inattentive; but, having rejected the unfamiliar, his opportunity is to deepen understanding and awareness. Since his audience do not have to digest a great deal of new information, he can explore familiar themes with greater depth.

In a way, the actor playing Enrique is put at a disadvantage here. As he runs through the clichés, he must act unaware that their recipient is married; so he is always on the point of appearing ridiculous.

ENRIQUE ¿Dónde
estoy?

MENCÍA En parte, a lo menos,
donde de vuestra salud
hay quien se huelgue.

ENRIQUE Lo creo,
si esta dicha, por ser mía,
no se deshace en el viento,
pues consultando conmigo
estoy, si despierto sueño,
o si dormido discurro,
pues a un tiempo duermo y velo. (I:157-66)

Like Mencía and Arias before him, Enrique compares his experience to a dream. It feels like a dream because the coincidence is such a strange one; and, like a dream, he fears it may disappear without trace. The wind, he says, may make it disappear. It feels like a dream, a castle of cards; the merest breath of wind will be enough to blow it away. We in the audience know perfectly well that the wind to destroy Enrique's illusions will be the breath of the speech that brings to him the news

of Mencía's marriage.

Enrique says he feels both asleep and yet wide awake: "despierto sueño". It is worth noting that the phrase "soñar despierto" has an idiomatic meaning that describes someone who is talking utter nonsense.(9) Perhaps Calderón has this in mind; he certainly seems to be trying to alert his audience to the vapidity that lies behind Enrique's clichés. He has him continue to try to establish an identity between "despierto sueño" and "dormido discurro" (I:164-6).

Yet when asleep one cannot "discurrir" in its (metaphorical) sense of examine the rights and wrongs of a particular issue;(10) sleep simply does not lend itself to rational discourse. That is an activity that takes place when one is awake; yet when awake one cannot, as Enrique suggests, "soñar" in its (literal) sense of "dream". On the other hand, a process of "discurrir" can take place whilst one sleeps - in its (literal) sense of "andar, caminar por diversas partes o parages" (Autoridades) - only the travelling takes place in the mind. In the same way, one can, when awake, day-dream in the (metaphorical) sense of "soñar".

So if we are alert, we may note a certain confusion between the literal and metaphorical levels of meaning in the words that Enrique uses. But then living itself seems to involve a constant confusion between the worlds of reality and metaphor; and this confusion seems to have held a particular fascination for Calderón's mind. His plays present us with a constant exploration of the literal and metaphorical levels of language. Such a process is wonderfully suited to the medium of theatre, such a fertile image of the process of life, and we can see it even in the titles of his plays. One thinks immediately of plays such as (inevitably) La vida es sueño, Casa con dos puertas mala

es de guardar, El pintor de su deshonraamong many others; and, of course, such a confusion is to be represented on a grand scale later on in this very play. Gutierre is to become so intoxicated with his medical metaphor that to attain a metaphorical health for his honour he bleeds a real woman to death.(11)

We can safely say, then, that Enrique is "dreaming" in more ways than one. But then in a way there is no point in looking in his speech for any sincere reflection of his state of mind; Enrique is not using language to communicate in that sense at all - "his tongue it cannot speak, but only flatter".(12) He is merely fishing for compliments. To describe someone as (possibly) belonging to a (presumably good) dream is one form of flattery; Enrique wants to add to it by declaring his indifference as to whether it is a dream or no.

We find echoes here of the old tradition in which the beloved comes to visit her lover in a vision or dream; and there is a contrast, too, between Mencía's attempts to reject the temptation to dream, for all its attractiveness, and come to terms with the demands of the real world.

Enrique is reluctant to do so:

ENRIQUE ¿Pero para qué averiguo,
poniendo a mayores riesgos
la verdad? (I:167-9)

In saying that verification can be a risk to truth, Enrique totally undermines the meaning of the words he uses.(13) "Averiguar" has to do with establishing truth; to say it can undermine the truth only makes sense if the "truth" that is being talked about is not the truth at all but merely a conventional lover's lie fabricated to suit the moment's convenience. The truth for him, it seems, is simply what

suits his purposes; and that is to say that the truth is merely what gives him pleasure.(14)

Mencía's situation, and her response, are somewhat different. She has not the freedom of a Prince; she has to live under the constraints of attempting to be the perfect wife. We have already noted how chastity in thought, word and deed was demanded of the perfect wife. So any unchaste desires, thoughts or feelings must be silenced. This inner silence corresponds to the silence that is demanded by the outer world, for:

> "aquella sóla es casta en quien ni la fama mintiendo
> osa poner mala nota" (15)

Mencía, then, has to confront the impossible task both of stifling any fond feeling for Enrique within herself, and of ensuring that no word of their past relationship reaches the public ear. The closing lines of her monologue have vividly communicated the strain involved:

MENCÍA ¡Piedad, divinos cielos!
¡Viva callando, pues callando muero!
¡Enrique! ¡Señor! (I:153-5)

"Callando muero": her silence is a kind of emotional death; she begs for pity, begs that Enrique may live - but if he does, he, too, must remain silent. Both, like lovers in a story, will cooperate in suffering silence and secrecy.(16)

But now that Enrique is indeed alive, his behaviour is the opposite of the silent suffering that Mencía's situation seems to demand. He is paying court to her on the assumption that she is both available for courtship and willing to receive it. What is worse, he has made it clear that this is an assumption he is unwilling to question. In her reply, Mencía hints that he needs to be disabused, and hints, too, at

the conditions that need to be fulfilled before that can take place:

MENCÍA Vuestra Alteza, gran señor,
trate prevenido y cuerdo
de su salud, cuya vida
dilate siglos eternos,
fénix de su misma fama,
imitando al que en el fuego
ave, llama, ascua y gusano,
urna, pira, voz y incendio,
nace, vive, dura y muere,
hijo y padre de sí mesmo;
que después sabrá de mí
donde está. (I:173-84)

These are complex and puzzling lines. They echo an immense wealth of traditional lore and symbolism, forming a complex web of associations it is not altogether easy to untangle.

On the surface, Mencía is simply asking Enrique to take care of his health and thus prolong his life. The phoenix was a fabulous Egyptian bird of whom it was told that it died in order to live. When it felt its strength waning, it would build its own funeral pyre out of aromatic woods, set it alight with the beating of its wings, and allow itself to be utterly consumed. From the ashes would be formed a tiny worm, from which the new phoenix would miraculously arise in its triumphant rebirth.

Enrique's fall has been a kind of death, and, if he takes care, he, too, will be reborn, arising from his sickbed with new strength, rejuvenated like the phoenix.(17) This, then, is the most basic of the meanings enclosed in Mencía's image; but a brief look at some of the symbolic meanings given to the creature will deepen the significance of the image.

For on a deeper level, the phoenix was commonly taken as a symbol of death and rebirth, and of the resurrection of the dead. It was symbolically understood as such first by Jewish,(18) and then by

Christian theologians.[19] According to a Jewish legend, after the Fall, Eve gave all the animals in the Garden the fruit of the Forbidden Tree. All did eat of it, except the phoenix, which refused. So it alone was allowed to remain in the Garden, and given a modified form of immortality.[20] So the phoenix does not belong to this world, but to the Garden; it only enters our world, the realm of sin and death, in order to die and be reborn and then return to its own country.

These attributes, or purity, sinlessness, and immortality, made it an obvious symbol of Christ. Pliny's last reported sighting of the bird was held to coincide with the Passion and Resurrection.[21] So, for instance, the aromatic woods of the phoenix' funeral pyre were taken to symbolise the precious spices given to Christ at his birth and with which he was anointed after his death.[22] The identification of Christ with the phoenix was accepted both by the Fathers of the Church[23] and by Calderón's contemporaries. Pellicer, for example, in his quite extraordinary book El Fénix y su historia natural (Madrid 1630), holds this to be the supreme significance of the Phoenix:

> "En todo es el Fénix símbolo de Christo. El Ave única, Christo único, el Fénix engendrado a la llama del sol entre aromáticos leños; Christo en las entrañas purísimas de María a sombras del Espíritu Santo. Parecidos en las facciones Christo y el Fénix. Muerto entre leños el Fénix, en un madero Christo. Commutado el Fénix en gusano, Christo gusano sagrado y puesto como para alimento de gusanos en el sepulchro. Ambos mueren a un tiempo. El Fénix buela a la ciudad del Sol, Christo a la diestra de su Padre" (24)

Such a set of associations gives us a deeper meaning into the use of the image here. In urging Enrique to imitate the phoenix, Mencía is urging him to imitate Christ. She is sacrificing her own desires;[25] she asks him to do likewise. If he does so, he will arise a new man,

"fénix de su misma fama". He will grow in good repute, and the "salud" he will then recover will be more than his physical health: he will be spiritually and emotionally healed. He will be cured of the sickness of his illicit love, and the health he will subsequently recover will be the health of his soul. "Salud", then, refers to more than health - it can also refer to salvation.

One other layer of meaning needs to be considered, one that is particularly relevant in the light of the alchemical imagery in Mencía's monologue.(26) For the phoenix was also taken to be a symbol of the philosopher's stone:

> "Autores ay de los chímicos, que dizen, que las noticias y metáforas del Fénix solo pertenecen a la Piedra Filosofal, y que no ay otro Fénix" (27)

So we find the phoenix standing for the goal of the Alchemists, the ultimate aim of alchemical processes of purification and refinement referred to in Mencía's previous speech: the fabulous Elixir, the magical substance that would transform base metals into gold, indefinitely prolong life and cure all disease. As a moral symbol, the Stone stood for the ultimate purity of the perfected soul.

On the one hand, then, such associations reinforce the ideas of renunciation and self-perfection that Mencía is urging upon him. On the other, they suggest that Enrique is Mencía's Elixir, the source of all her emotional life.(28) In this context, there is a deep sadness in Mencía's words. It is impossible to tell for sure how much of the intellectual content we have been trying to analyse could have been perceived by the audience; but, spoken by a good actress, the speech's emotional tone would be unmistakable.

MENCÍA imitando al que en el fuego
ave, llama, ascua y gusano,
urna, pira, voz y incendio,
nace, vive, dura y muere
hijo y padre de sí mesmo... (I:178-82)

The creature is immediately placed within the context of the fire that consumes it; and the next line follows this process through its various stages - from living bird, to burning flame, to glowing ember, and finally to worm. We are left with an uneasy reminder of the worm of the charnel house: the process from worm back to living bird is left unspoken. The living bird is compared to an urn, the beauty of its plumage[29] a mere repository for ashes; it is a kind of death in life, its own funeral pyre. Mencía does not speak of its glorious song, with which the phoenix greets the break of day, when

> "she begins to pour forth strains of sacred song
> and hail the new light with wondrous voice" (30)

- instead we are told of a "voz", a simple cry of pain as the creature burns in the fire. Again, the line ends with a reminder not of the bird's life, but the manner of its death.

As for the progress of the creature's life, it is described in a sequence of four verbs that suggest a process of futile aging leading to death -

MENCÍA nace, vive, dura y muere. (I:181)

In a way, the greatest miracle of this bird was its inexhaustible, self-sufficient fecundity, its capacity to create inexhaustible sources of life and self-renewal:

> "She is offspring to herself, her own father and
> heir, her own nurse, and always a foster child
> to herself" (31)

In Mencía's speech, the hopeful, life directed attributes described by Lactantius are reversed. Instead of the renewal implied in the process from father to son, we find the aging process implied in the transformation of young son to aging father, "hijo y padre de sí mesmo". The inexhaustible self-sufficient fecundity described by Lactantius is transformed into a lonely sterility.

The phoenix was unique and solitary; there was none like it, and it had no companion. If Mencía and Enrique keep to Mencía's resolve, they will part for ever. They, too, will be alone. There will be no possibility of sexual union, only separation. The phoenix will return to its own country, and Mencía will be left in the land of death.

Sadly, the phoenix was only a creature of fable and story; the philosopher's stone merely an illusion. The idealised Enrique will also turn out to be a mere chimaera. Although the speech is ostensibly a celebration of immortality and a pointer to life's perfectability, in its sadness it has a dying note.

NOTES

(1) See Juana de José Prades, Teoría sobre los personajes de la comedia nueva (Madrid, 1963), p. 76.

(2) In Dámaso Alonso and José Blecua, Antología de Poesía...de tipo tradicional (Madrid, 1956), no. 20. In their note to this poem, the editors refer to its astonishing popularity: "los cuatro primeros versos de este romance se convirtieron en la canción mas glosada del siglo XVI." (p. 228).

(3) To stress the similarities between play and ballad is not to ignore the differences. The wife in the romance gives way to temptation; Mencía resists it. But the tragic ending is the same: hinted at in the romance, enacted on the stage.

(4) "Any idealisation of sexual love, in a society where marriage is purely utilitarian, must begin by being an idealisation of adultery", C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (Oxford, 1936), p. 13.

(5) Ed. E. Allison Peers (Liverpool, 1934); see Otis H. Green, Spain and the Western Tradition (Madison, 1963), vol. I, pp. 237-40; Donald R. Larson, The Honour Plays of Lope de Vega (Harvard, 1977), pp. 122-30.

(6) It can be found in vol. III of the Real Academia Española edition of Lope's Obras Dramáticas (Madrid, 1917), pp. 612-44.

(7) I:175-83.

(8) A similar scene also occurs in the source-play, if handled with less skill and subtlety; ed. cit., p. 119ab.

(9) This meaning is recorded in Autoridades, which defines the phrase as referring to one who "discurre, cree, o refiere cosas inciertas sin orden ni fundamento" (sv. "soñar").

(10) Ibid.: "examinar, pensar y conferir las razones que hai en favor o en contra de alguna cosa, infiriéndolas y sacándolas de sus principios".

(11) Of course the woman is "real" only within the conventions of the medium. For Calderón's use of imagery in this play and elsewhere, see A.A. Parker, 'Metáfora y símbolo en la interpretación de Calderón', in Actas del primer congreso internacional de hispanistas (Oxford, 1964), pp. 141-60; B.W. Wardropper, 'Poetry and Drama in Calderón's El médico de su honra, RR 49 (1958), pp. 3-11.

(12) The phrase is Bob Dylan's; from his song "The Wicked Messenger". See his Writings and Drawings (London, 1973), p. 268.

(13) Cf. Autoridades: "inquirir, hacer diligencias con todo cuidado, para saber exactamente la verdad de alguna cosa".

(14) In Calderón's time, this was generally held to be a notorious failing of Princes. For example: "En las Cortes y casas de los Príncipes la maior pestilencia es, que o mui pocas veces se dicen, o se adornan o disfrazan de tal manera que no pueden facilmente ser conoscidas...", Furió Ceriol, El Concejo i Consegeros del Príncipe, ed. Diego Sevilla Andres (Valencia, 1952), p. 147.

(15) Fray Luis de León, La perfecta casada, ed. cit., p. 251. This was a commonly held, if unrealistic, criterion; Cervantes' Lotario was only repeating conventional wisdom when he said: "Todo el honor de las mujeres consiste en la opinión buena que dellas se tiene", Don Quijote, I, 37; ed. cit., p. 335.

(16) Cf. the behaviour of Cardenio and Luscinda in Cervantes, ibid., I, 24, p. 227.

(17) Much of this basic information is neatly summarised by C. A. Jones in his footnote to I:175. For a source contemporary to Calderón, see Geronimo Cortés, Tratado de los animales (Valencia, 1672), cap. 23, "Del Ave Fenix".

(18) Cf. Midrash, translated and edited by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon (London, 1939), I:151-2. Different Jewish sects elaborated different accounts of the bird's death and rebirth; these differences are the symbolic representations of differing sectarian views. The Fathers of the Church inherited this legacy of symbolism and controversy.

(19) Tertullian, De Resurrectione Carnis, in Writings, vol. II, pp. 215-333, published as vol. XV of Ante-Nicene Christian Library, edited by A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (Edinburgh, 1870). Tertullian uses the phoenix as proof against the heretical arguments of those who deny the resurrection of the flesh. God allowed for the resurrection of the phoenix, a mere bird; and "Our Lord has declared that we are 'better than many sparrows'. Well, if not better than many a phoenix too, it were no great thing. But must men die once and for all, while birds in Arabia are sure of resurrection?" (p. 236).

(20) See Louis Ginzburg, Legends of the Jews (Philadelphia, 1946), I, pp. 32-3

(21) Pliny, Natural History, trans. J. Bostock and H. T. Riley (London, 1855), Bk. X, chapter 2.

(22) "She heaps together cinnamon and the odour of the scented amomum and balsams with mixed leaves. Neither the twig of the mild cassia nor of the fragrant acanthus is absent...", Lactantius, De Ave Phoenice, in Writings, vol. II, pp. 216-7, published as vol. XXII of the Ante-Nicene Christian Library (Edinburgh, 1871).

(23) Cf. "Le phénix consommé par les flammes de son nid est l'image de Christ consommé a Jérusalem dans le feu de sa passion. Le troisième jour il revient à la vie comme le Christ resucité par son Père." Honorius of Autun, from the Easter Sermon of his Speculum Ecclesiae, as quoted by Reau, in Iconographie de l'art Chrétien (Paris, 1955), I, p. 97; Clement of Rome: "The phoenix is a still more marvellous symbol of resurrection....", in J. B. Lightfoot, The Epistles of Clement of Rome (London, 1869), p. 93; H. L. Kessler, 'The solitary bird in Van der Gies Garden of Eden', Journal of the Warburg Institute, 28 (1965), pp. 326-9.

(24) F. 235v. See, too, Góngora's exquisite sonnet, "Máquina funeral, que desta vida", in Poems of Góngora, ed. R. O. Jones (Cambridge, 1966), p. 89.

(25) In his Emblemas Morales, Covarrubias drew on yet another set of symbolic meanings appropriate to this context; in his emblem, the phoenix dies consumed in the fires of love, representing the repentant sinner, burning with love of God, dies to his own self and through the grace of Christ rises renewed and free of sin; Emblemas Morales (Madrid, 1610), facsimile reprint 1973, cent. 3, no. 90. Pellicer attributes a variation of the same idea to Juan de san Gerónimo; see his El Fénix y su historia natural, f. 228v.

(26) I:121-55.

(27) Pellicer, op. cit., f. 13r. Curiously enough, Pellicer also mentions a similar interpretation of Ovid's Metamorphoses - "debajo de aquellas fábulas estan disfraçadas los preceptos de la chimia".

(28) This is not to imply any adverse moral judgement on Mencía. Her conscious intent is conveyed as honourable within the conventional morality of the day; adverse judgement, I think, is to be passed on the conventional morality, rather than on her. But like so many of us, her sincerely good intentions are bedevilled by her unconscious desires.

(29) According to Covarrubias in his Tesoro, its bright and beautifully coloured feathers made it 'mui vistosa'.

(30) Lactantius, De Ave Phoenice, ed. cit., p. 215.

(31) Ibid., p. 219.

CHAPTER SIX

"aun un bruto se desboca con celos."

So far, one of the play's main sources of tension and interest has been the conflict between Mencía's private emotions, as a woman, and the demands of her public role, as a wife. It is time to begin to explore another source of dramatic tension: the clash between the "inner" and "outer" aspects of Enrique's persona - the clash between Enrique the Prince and Enrique the man. As Furió Ceriol acutely observed:

"Todo príncipe está compuesto de casi dos personas..." (1)

The interests of the two do not always coincide.

Mencía is eager to address Enrique as Prince, but Enrique is eager to address Mencía as a person. Mencía wishes to re-establish relations between them on a basis of safe formality; but Enrique wishes to re-establish an old intimacy. So the scene oscillates between the formal and the intimate. Mencía takes care to address Enrique with all the formality implied in his title, with the use of the third person singular of the verb:

MENCÍA Vuestra Alteza, gran señor,
trate prevenido y cuerdo (I:173-4)

But Enrique addresses Mencía with all the familiarity of the second person singular:

ENRIQUE Si estoy vivo y te miro
ya mayor dicha no espero;
ni mayor dicha tampoco
si te miro estando muerto... (I:185-8)

The content of his speech is very much in accord with the familiarity of its tone. It consists of a string of compliments: Mencía is his angel, to be beside her is to be in paradise, wherever he may be, her presence

is the only thing that counts...all prefaced with an outright rejection of the possibility of "salud" (in all its various senses) that she has just offered him:

ENRIQUE No lo deseo... (I:184)

He does not wish for renunciation, but for possession. The desire is not reciprocated, and the ensuing struggle is reflected in the lines the actors are given to speak to each other. At least for the time being, we have only the words to guide us; but here, as always, our reading must be informed by an imaginative sense of the actors' physical actions. Enrique's attempts to regain an old familiarity will not stop at words - he will be eager to touch Mencía. The actress must respond; Mencía's attempts to achieve a tactful disengagement on a verbal level will correspond to attempts to put herself beyond Enrique's physical reach.(2)

It is important, too, to remember that such a scene would be played in front of an audience whose sexual impulses were more strongly repressed than those of an audience today, and that it is likely that the scene would create a correspondingly greater sexual tension. We take it for granted that a play will be staged in front of an audience in which men and women mingle freely; there is no doubt that a situation in which the two sexes in the audience were rigidly separated from each other would create a very different atmosphere. The authorities were aware of the possibilities for disturbance; and this is reflected in the elaborate arrangements that were made to ensure that the women members of the audience entered and left the theatre through different entrances from the men, and that contact between the two sexes was kept to an absolute minimum. Precautions had to be taken at the end of a

performance to ensure that the female members of the audience were not molested as they left the theatre: guards had to be placed at the women's point of departure from the building.(3) Moralists hostile to the theatre considered the presence of women both on the stage and amongst the audience as a powerful source of sexual provocation and of moral corruption.(4)

All this points to the possibility of an atmosphere heavily charged with sexual tension - an atmosphere that Calderón would doubtless have known how to exploit for his own ends - and one that would have contributed to the tension and expectancy amongst the audience of a scene such as this.

Be that as it may, in this scene the Prince in Enrique is laid aside and forgotten; it is the man that speaks, and a passionate one at that. He displays all the characteristics of the stage lover(5) - a man certain of his conquest, yet liable to fly into a passionate fit of jealousy at the slightest suspicion of its loss.

But whether he acts the Prince, or acts the lover, the news Mencía has to bring is wounding to both. Princes hate uncomfortable truths;(6) and this particular truth strikes at the dignity of his manhood. No wonder Mencía is uneasy.

MENCÍA (AP.) Presto de tantos favores
será desengaño el tiempo (I:199-200)

Her nervousness is understandable; it causes her to procrastinate. She will not tell him the news herself; she will allow the "desengaño" to come of its own accord when her husband returns. Presented with a fait accompli, she must trust to Enrique's discretion and breeding not to make a scene. In the meanwhile, she decides to play for time. She neither rejects nor accepts his compliments - but simply diverts him

onto safer ground:

MENCÍA Dígame ahora, ¿cómo está
vuestra Alteza? (I:201-2)

Her tactic appears successful; so she drops her guard a little, and adopts the less formal "vos":

MENCÍA Fué gran caída;
pero en descansando, pienso
que cobraréis la salud; (I:205-7)

From Mencía's point of view, this is all most convenient, this prosaic, hostess-like approach; and, having suggested he rest, the next courteous step is to inform him that a room is being prepared for his convenience. All this quite naturally leads onto the deferential apologies that it is correct for a polite hostess to offer, for the modesty of the accommodation provided:

MENCÍA y ya os están previniendo
cama donde descanséis.
Que me perdonáis, os ruego,
la humildad de la posada; (I:208-11)

But this show of polite concern has led her into a trap. To ask for pardon for the humbleness of the surroundings is to imply responsibility for them. As an unmarried daughter, such responsibility would not be hers; so she begins hastily to try to rectify the slip:

MENCÍA aunque disculpada quedo... (I:212)

but Enrique does not let her finish. His suspicions are aroused; he interrupts with a direct question it is difficult to evade. But Mencía does her best:

ENRIQUE Muy como señora habláis,
Mencía. ¿Sois vos el dueño
desta casa? (7)

MENCÍA No señor; (I:213-5)

This "no" must provoke a reaction in both actor and audience; it is equivocal, to say the least, and Mencía wriggles on the hook for a while longer:

MENCÍA pero de quien lo es, sospecho
que lo soy. (I:216-7)

In other words, no and yes. No, in the sense that the master of the house is her (as yet unacknowledged) husband; yes, in the sense that according to the rules of chivalresque love, every good knight is in submission to his lady, who is master of his will.(8) But this buys her only a second's reprieve; such equivocation makes Enrique impatient, he presses home his interrogation, and Mencía is finally forced to confess to the miserable truth:

ENRIQUE ¿Y quién lo es?

MENCIA Un ilustre caballero,
Gutierre Alfonso Solís,
mi esposo y esclavo vuestro. (I:217-20)

The reaction is violent;(9) Enrique rises, and hobbles angrily about the stage. The Prince, here, is a mere man, at the mercy of both physical pain(10) and emotional discomfiture. At this point, Arias and Diego make a symmetrical entrance through the two doors back stage. They come in as if from another world. It is a world in which a Prince's word is law, where no trouble or expense will be spared to minister to his needs. Their words strike a false note, spoken, as they are, to a man so strikingly confronted with his physical and emotional

vulnerability:

SALE DON ARIAS

ARIAS Dame, gran señor, las plantas,
que mil veces toco y beso,
agradecido a la dicha
que en tu salud nos ha vuelto
la vida a todos.

SALE DON DIEGO

DIEGO Ya puede
vuestra Alteza a ese aposento
retirarse, donde está
prevenido todo aquello
que pudo en la fantasía
bosquejar el pensamiento. (I:225-34)

Such dignified phrases, so suggestive of court ceremony, strike an odd contrast to Enrique's display of naked emotion. He reduces them to stuttering expostulation; he brings their courtliness down about their ears like an ill-built house of cards:

ENRIQUE Don Arias, dame un caballo;
dame un caballo, don Diego.
Salgamos presto de aquí.

ARIAS ¿Qué decís?

ENRIQUE Que me déis presto
un caballo.

DIEGO Pues señor...

ARIAS Mira...

ENRIQUE Estáse Troya ardiendo,
y Eneas de mis sentidos,
he de librarlos del fuego.

VASE DON DIEGO (I:235-42)

As Diego scuttles off to prepare a horse, we are led back, in a way, to the play's beginning, and to the almost interminable discussion about the celebrated fall from the horse and its significance. For after calling repeatedly for a horse, Enrique compares his predicament

to that of Aeneas at the fall of Troy, and then in a long tirade, initially addressed to Arias, but in reality directed against Mencía (I:243-76), passionately denounces her treachery as being in some way responsible for his fall. These lines can make better sense in the context of a feeling for the values attached in 17th century Spain to horses and horsemanship.

This is not necessarily an easy task. The majority of a modern audience will neither have ridden a horse nor belonged to a society in which the ownership and riding of horses was common. So an audience today simply does not posses the "feel" of the event in the same way as the original; and this "feeling", so much almost a matter of instinct, certainly of emotional values taken for granted and unawarely possessed, has to be laboriously reconstructed before we can really enter the scene in our imaginations.

In Calderón's time, a horse was not simply a luxury the wealthier classes of society could choose to indulge in; it was an indispensable part of a gentleman's personal equipment. Anyone aspiring to be thought a gentleman was well advised to get himself seen on horseback; anyone struggling to maintain gentlemanly status in the face of penury could hardly afford to be seen too often on foot. So we find don Toribio, Quevedo's remarkable creation, advising his acolyte Pablos of the importance of a regular public appearance on a horse:

> "Estamos obligados a andar a caballo una vez al mes, aunque sea en polenco, por las calles públicas" (11)

Such a state of values was not confined to the imagination of the satirist. In a letter that would have given Quevedo much malicious pleasure, the unfortunate Góngora complains that his genteel poverty has put him under house arrest, since he cannot afford to keep his

horses:

> "Yo estoy la casa por cárcel, por falta de caballos..." (12)

Since a horse mattered so much to a man's standing as a gentleman, it naturally tended to matter even more to a King. Velázquez's equestrian portraits of Philip IV are an outstanding example of a tradition in which the majesty of kingship was symbolised by the King's dominion over a spirited horse.(13) Furió Ceriol remarks somewhat sardonically that a King would do well to learn to ride properly, for a horse only respects horsemanship, and has no respect for any abstract notions of majesty:

> "dixo bien...un filosofo, que los Principes solo una cosa sabian bien, i esta es cavalgar en un cavallo, i otra cosa no; porque el caballo, no sabiendo lisonjear, sin respeto ninguno de personas, assi echa al Rei como a qualquier otro de la silla" (14)

So an obligation on both King and gentleman alike was to know how to ride well. But it seems that more fundamental values were involved. The ability to ride a spirited and restive stallion was more than a simple indication of high social status; it was also a sign of manhood. Just as driving a fast car at speed satisfies a certain ideal of virility now,(15) so flashy horsemanship was the mark of a "real man". Such values are hard to pin down, but we can see them operating in the need apparently felt by Spanish soldiers to display their manhood even in the most exotic and unlikely locations;(16) and they seem to inform the opening scene of Lope's play, Los comendadores de Córdoba.

The two young comendadores, don Jorge and don Fernando, have just returned to Córdoba, having distinguished themselves in the wars

against the Moors. They are quite naturally expected to ride through the streets of the city on fine horses, to show off their manhood and their valour. The horses are fierce:

DON LUIS de española furia llenos,
un bayo y un alazán
desempedrando el zaguán
y jabonando los frenos (17)

- and the young men are nervous:

DON JORGE No hemos de salir en ellos (4b)

They ask to be given less spirited horses:

DON FERNANDO Póngannos dos, por tu vida,
más mansos. (4b)

In the end they allow themselves to be persuaded; their initial reluctance is the first of the hints Lope uses to plant doubts in the minds of his audience as to the young men's manhood. Later in the play, don Jorge is about to meet his lover at the reja when another man approaches. A real man, or rather a typical stage representation of a real man, would have drawn his sword at once, but Jorge dithers:

DON JORGE Hombre es éste. ¿Qué he de hacer? (20a)

When a friend of his is engaged in a fight, he cannot draw his sword to help him (45b); when Fernando looks in the mirror and it cracks, his brother sourly remarks:

DON JORGE Debísteos de aojar
si tan lindo os parecesteis. (46b)

All these are hints that in terms of the code of masculine values so enthusiastically celebrated by Lope in this play, Jorge and Fernando

are not "real men". Their lack of virility is contrasted with the real manhood shown by the Veinticuatro, and this contrast would be emphasised by the stage presentation.

Quevedo presents his Pablos in very much the same light; particularly significant in this context is the scene in which he is riding his (illicitly borrowed) horse up and down in front of his lady's window:

> "al dar la tercera vuelta, asomóse doña Ana. Yo, que la ví, ... quise hacer galanterías; díle dos varazos, tiréle de la rienda; empinóse, y dio luego dos coces; y apretó a correr, y dio conmigo por las orejas en un charco." (18)

Quevedo appears to be directing his satire against Pablos, rather than the values of virility that motivate him. Pablos is shown up, yet again,(19) to be less than a real man.

Good horsemanship, then, forms an involved part of a complex system of values relating both to a man's virility and his social status. So when Enrique falls off his horse, this is to be taken as more than a physical misfortune.(20) It is a blow to his manhood, and a source of humiliation. He has been humiliated twice over: he has lost his seat, and he has lost his woman. So the values of machismo, with a tortuous logic all their own would tend to connect both events. This is precisely what Calderón has Enrique do. He calls out for his horse; Troy is burning, he shouts, this is urgent:

> ENRIQUE Estáse Troya ardiendo,
> y Eneas de mis sentidos,
> he de librarlos del fuego. (I:240-2)

According to the story,(21) Aeneas rescued his father from certain death amidst the burning ruins of Troy by carrying him to

safety on his shoulders. Enrique is obviously not interested in the story's potential as an image of filial piety; he is concerned to express his sense of humiliated outrage. Just like him, the Trojan hero Aeneas had been betrayed both by a woman - by Helen, whose adultery with Paris caused the outbreak of the Trojan war - and by a horse. Of course, the Trojan horse, unlike Enrique's, was made of wood - but a man nursing a grievance is not likely to allow such pedantic niceties to deflect him from his outraged imagery.(22) He has been wronged, he insists, he has come to his senses amidst the blazing ruin of his hopes, and he must carry them clear before he is overwhelmed in the fires of his passionate emotions.

The word "sentidos" carries a complex of meanings here. It can refer to his physical senses - Enrique no longer wants to hear or see Mencía - or to his intellectual faculties, which must be rescued before they are overwhelmed in his emotions.(23) We may choose to understand it in a third, less complimentary sense, as "el apetito, o parte inferior del hombre" - for there is little that is rational in what Enrique is saying here. Like so many of us, when our feelings have been hurt, Enrique tries to deflect the blame and odium for his misfortunes onto Mencía.(24) His fall, he says, was an omen foretelling his fall from her grace (I:243-52); his horse wanted to display its prowess before her house;(25) jealousy made it bolt and lose control:

ENRIQUE montes de celos
se le pusieron delante
porque tropezase en ellos;
que aun un bruto se desboca
con celos; y no hay tan diestro
jinete, que allí no pierda
los estribos al correrlos. (I:262-8)

These words strike an ominous note. "Perder los estribos" refers in a

literal sense to a rider who has got his feet dislodged from the stirrups, losing firmness on his mount, and thus losing control over its movements. In its metaphorical sense, the phrase refers to reason losing control over the emotions.(26) Enrique is abdicating responsibility for his actions. No-one, however skilful a rider, can control a horse that has bolted; no-one, however reasonable a person, can control their actions when suffering from jealousy. Gutierre is to offer a similarly specious justification for his actions:

GUTIERRE cuando llega
un marido a saber que hay
celos, faltará la ciencia... (II:688-90)

Enrique offers three interpretations of his fall; they all assert that it was nothing to do with him. If his horse fell, he insists, it was Mencía's fault. Calderón is alerting us here to the absurd conclusions we can be led to if we let our feelings run away with themselves. On a rational level, it is absurd to imagine that the behaviour of Enrique's horse had anything to do with Mencía's presence: at the time, neither horse nor rider were aware of it. Enrique is simply trying to vituperate Mencía and exonerate his own bad horsemanship.

In response, Mencía does her best to bring this outburst of emotion to a halt. Again, she patiently tries to bring their relationship out of the realm of private hurts and into the sphere of public duty. Once again, she reminds Enrique of his title and position, as if to emphasise his duty and obligation towards her:

MENCÍA Quien oyere a vuestra Alteza
quejas, agravios, desprecios,
podrá formar de mi honor
presunciones y concetos
indignos dél; (I:277-81)

There is a marked contrast between this speech, with its careful formality and strict self-control, and the violent emotionality of Enrique's. "Aun un bruto se desboca con celos" (I:265-6): "desbocarse" literally refers to a horse that refuses to obey the bit; metaphorically it describes a man who has lost control of himself and unthinkingly insults another.(27) Enrique may have thought he was describing his horse; we can sense that he may also, unwittingly, have been describing himself. His thoughtless words carry insulting implications. He has implied that his relationship with Mencía was closer than it may actually have been; and he has suggested that Mencía's marriage was a callous betrayal of his trust. Mencía parries such "quejas, agravios, desprecios" (I:278) with a careful, and impersonal formality. Allied to her use of Enrique's royal title is a rigid exclusion of reference to her own personal feelings. If she feels hurt within herself, she does her best to hide it; her words, at least, indicate that it is not her feelings that are at stake, but her honour. Her feelings may be hard to control; the actress' delivery could well indicate an inner struggle.(28)

Honour, as we have already seen, has to do with both self-control of the inner world of feeling, and control of the outer world of report. Here, Mencía has control over the former, it seems; she is seeking to establish control over the latter.

MENCÍA Y yo agora,
por si acaso llevó el viento
cabal alguna razón,
sin que en partidos acentos
la troncase, responder
a tantos agravios quiero, (I:281-86)

These are words that recall her earlier monologue.(29) But there, the wind of rumour was a mere abstraction, whilst here it takes on physical

form: Arias, who has been hearing all that has been spoken. Just as Enrique nominally addressed his attack on Mencía to Arias (I:243), so now Mencía addresses her defence to him. He has heard one side of the story; now let him hear the other:

MENCÍA donde fueron quejas
vayan con el mismo aliento
desengaños. (I:287-9)

As for us in the audience, we have somehow to make up our own minds. We have to choose between alternative versions of the story; Enrique has just made much of the closeness of their past relationship, whilst Mencía now belittles it:

MENCÍA Vuestra Alteza
liberal de sus deseos,
generoso de sus gustos,
pródigo de sus afectos,
puso los ojos en mi;
es verdad, yo lo confieso. (I:289-94)

There is perhaps a hint of defiance here. Calderón has her play down all that has occurred: in a carefully chosen structured climax, Enrique is described as a man who very easily falls in love,(30) but who, in an equally carefully structured anti-climax, did no more than make eyes at her. As to her response, it is described not in terms of her self, but of her honour:

MENCÍA Bien sabe, de tantos años
de experiencias, el respeto
con que constante mi honor
fue una montaña de hielo (I:295-8)

Her honour maintained the respect that a subject owes her Prince. It disdained his attentions - ice being the common metaphor for a woman's chastity and denial of her lover's demands - immutable like a mountain. When it changed, it did so solely in accord with natural law:

MENCÍA ...una montaña de hielo
conquistada de las flores
escuadrones que arma el tiempo. (I:298-300)

In spring, the snow melts, flowers blossom on the mountainside. In the same way it is part of the natural order of things for a girl to get married to one who is her social equal. So Enrique has no grounds for complaint:

MENCÍA Si me casé,¿de qué engaño
se queja, siendo sujeto
imposible a sus pasiones
pues soy para dama más,
lo que para esposa menos? (I:301-6)

The contrast is neatly put; the impossibility of marriage between a Prince and a commoner meant that she could never relate to him as a prospective wife. Since there was never any question of her marrying Enrique, Mencía argues, she cannot be said to have betrayed him by marrying another.

Here again, she is appealing to Enrique's sense of what befits him as a Prince; she concludes by referring to her own duties as a subject:

MENCÍA Y así, en esta parte ya
disculpada, en la que tengo
de mujer, a vuestros pies
humilde, señor, os ruego
no os ausentéis desta casa,
poniendo a tan claros riesgos
la salud. (I:307-13)

She seeks to imply a harmony between the two worlds, the private and the public. In the private sphere, he has no grounds for complaint; in the public, he has a responsibility to his kingdom not to endanger his health. So both as a private person and as a loyal subject,[31] she begs him to stay.

Mencía's defence is a subtle one. It conceals more than it reveals. When she describes her reactions to Enrique's advances, she speaks only of her honour, and evades all mention of herself. Yet we have already heard how the demands of her honour are not at all in accord with her inner feelings (I:121-55); and when she argues that Enrique could never have expected to marry her she tells us no more than what we already know. Her disingenuous "soy para dama más, lo que para esposa menos" (I:305-6) does not tell us the extent to which she really was, or was not, Enrique's dama. If we think about this scene as a piece of exposition, it leaves us very much in the dark. Are we to believe Enrique's unreasoned attack - or Mencía's byzantine defence? Calderón takes care to leave us guessing.

NOTES

(1) Furió Ceriol, El Concejo i Consegeros del Príncipe, ed. cit., p. 95.

(2) The scene has its counterpart in Act II:59-122. Here the physical assault will be carried a stage further; the closing lines sound very much like the prelude to rape.

(3) See the regulations of the protector of the Corrales in 1608, quoted by Shergold in his History of the Spanish Stage, pp. 386ss. Great stress was laid on the importance of having alcaldes at the women's entrance to the theatre: "y esto combiene mucho, porque suele auer alli gran bulla y yndecencia", op. cit., p. 391. For a note of the expense involved in building this separate entrance, see op. cit., p. 187.

(4) For example: "Mujeres de excelente hermosura, de singular gracia de meneos y posturas, salen en el teatro a representar diversas personajes en forma y traje y hábito de mujeres, y aun de hombres, cosa fue grandemente despierta a la lujuria, y tiene muy gran fuerza para corromper los hombres.", Mariana, Contra los juegos públicos, in BAE, XXXI, p. 424. See, too, many of the attacks on the theatre gathered together by Cotarelo in his Bibliografía de las controversias sobre la licitud del teatro en España (Madrid, 1904), especially pp. 123, 215, 368.

(5) See Juana de José Prades, Teoría sobre los personajes de la comedia nueva (Madrid, 1963), pp. 90-1.

(6) This particular commonplace was crudely staged in the opening scene of Rodrigo de Herrera's Del cielo viene el buen rey (BAE, XLV, pp. 237-51). The King has had a bad dream; he asks for an interpretation of it from his two councillors and his fool. One councillor gives a flattering interpretation he knows to be false, and the fool, Moscón, does the same. Lisandro, the wise councillor, gives a true, but unflattering, interpretation and is sent into exile. Moscón is given gold. He comments in an aside: "¡Lo que vale la lisonja! / Aprended, mirones, desto." (p. 238a).

(7) Notice how Enrique has dropped the 'tú' here; the scene is full of subtle variations in the modes of address, variations that would undoubtedly be reflected in the actors' voices.

(8) A tradition marvellously parodied by Cervantes in such passages as these: "¡Oh princesa Dulcinea, señora deste cautivo corazón!", Don Quijote, I, cap. 2; ed. cit., p. 42.

(9) In spite of the way Mencía does her tactful best in l. 220 to minimise the loss of prestige suffered by Enrique and place her husband in a subordinate position to him: "Esclavo vuestro".

(10) Here again, the printed page conceals a fair amount of stage business. At 204-5, Enrique is doing his bluff best to minimise, in a manly way, the pain he feels in his leg; after he has got up at line 221, Mencía's words suggests that it hurts him to stand: "No os levantéis, deteneos; /ved que no podéis estar / en pie" (I:222-4). As Diego and Arias make their entrance, one imagines him hobbling angrily about the stage.

(11) Quevedo, El Buscón, ed. Américo Castro (Clásicos Castellanos: Madrid, 1967), p. 151; cf. also pp. 205, 210ss.

(12) Letter of 4th June 1624, in Obras Completas, ed. J. and I. Millé y Giménez (Madrid, 1943), p. 942.

(13) Cf. José Lopez Rey, Velásquez (London, 1980), pp. 82-4. Note the difference between the spirited charger ridden by the King in the portrait reproduced on p. 98, and the more amenable mare ridden by the Queen on p. 97. See also J. E. Varey, "La campagne dans le théâtre espagnol au XVIIème siècle" in Dramaturgie et Société, I (Paris, 1968), p. 60, no. 28.

(14) El Consejo i Consejeros del Príncipe, ed. cit., p. 147.

(15) A modern reflection of such values can be found in Jack Kerouac's On the Road (Penguin: 1972).

(16) Cf, for example, de Soto's display in front of the Inca Atahuallpa; described by W. H. Prescott in his Conquest of Peru, revised edition (London, 1893), p. 189.

(17) Ed. cit., p. 4a.

(18) Quevedo, El Buscón, ed. cit., p. 218.

(19) Note the state of sexual impotence described by don Toribio, ed. cit., p. 148; Pablos' asexual conquest as a galán de monjas, p. 249ss; and his female disguise as a thief in Córdoba, p. 267-8.

(20) And more, too, than a simple moral symbol of loss of self-control.

(21) See Virgil's Aeneid, ed. J. W. Mackail (Oxford, 1930), bk. II, ll. 658ss. Aeneas rescued his father, but left his wife to die. So Enrique will rescue his "sentidos" and abandon Mencía.

(22) The image would probably be not unfamiliar with the audience. See, for instance, Lope de Vega, Audiencias del Rey don Pedro, BAE, CCXII, pp. 186a, 193b; Tirso de Molina, El Melancólico, ed. B. Varela Jacome (Madrid, 1967), p. 73,

(23) "Sentidos": "el entendimiento, o razón, en quanto discierne las cosas" (Autoridades, s.v.).

(24) A similar shifting of blame, and abdication of responsibility is also staged by Calderón, on a much more serious level, in his El príncipe constante. Prince Fernando is dying of starvation as a direct result of the orders of the Muslim King; yet, like many an oppressor, the King disclaims responsibility. When Fernando begs for food, he answers: "pues tu muerte causó / tu misma mano y yo no / no esperes piedad de mí" (ed. cit., p. 84).

(25) I:253-60; a similar motive inspired Pablos to show off his (non-existent) horsemanship with the disastrous results already discussed.

(26) See Autoridades, s.v. "estribos". This idiomatic use of the phrase ties the event in with its moralistic interpretation advocated by Valbuena Briones et al.

(27) "la persona que ciegamente se despeña a decir palabras injuriosas, ofensivas, y perjudiciales a otro" (Autoridades).

(28) This may not necessarily be the case; generally, when Calderón wishes to draw our attention to a struggle between a character's inner feelings and her outward appearance, he employs an aside. For example, see Laura in Casa con dos puertas, ed. cit., p. 285a. The little aside makes it clear that her harshness towards Félix is no more than a façade.

(29) "Vuelva el aire / los repetitos acentos / que llevó", I:133-5.

(30) I think there is also a hint here that Enrique's general behaviour is that of a don Juan; that his amorous behaviour was, just for a while, centred on her. This is emphasised again at I:305 - "soy para dama más" - as if Mencía had been one of a series of mistresses, just another easy conquest.

(31) "mujer" also refers to her in her social capacity as wife and, on this occasion, hostess.

C H A P T E R S E V E N

"él me ganó la dama...
yo le gané el caballo."

So far, then, Calderón has presented us with a series of images of a troubled and uncertain world. He chose to begin with a graphic image of political instability - the fall of a Prince - set against a background of internecine and civil strife. He has made Enrique more than a simple focus of political turmoil; the Prince is also a source of domestic conflict.

At this point (I:315), this conflict is just coming to a head; Mencía's attempt to offer a reasonable explanation, to soothe the wounded feelings of her former lover, has failed. Her plea to Enrique to stay, at least for appearance's sake, has been angrily rejected. A carefully hidden secret seems about to be revealed. It is at this point that Calderón brings on the husband. Gutierre could hardly have chosen a worse moment to arrive; his frantic politeness is almost comically inappropriate.

Calderón gives him a tactfulness that verges on the pedantic. Whilst it was a commonplace to refer to the king as the sun,(1) the conflict between Enrique and his brother the King would make such an epithet seem worse than tactless. Gutierre takes extraordinary care to use a suitably flattering solar epithet that nonetheless makes a subtle distinction between the king, the sun, and the rays of glory that emanate from it:

GUTIERRE Déme los pies vuestra Alteza,
si puedo de tanto sol
tocar, ¡o rayo español!
la majestad y grandeza. (I:315-8)(2)

When it comes to describing his own feelings about Enrique's presence, Gutierre delicately skirts round another tactless pitfall:

GUTIERRE Con alegría y tristeza
hoy a vuestras plantas llego, (I:319-20)

Obviously, a loyal subject is to be delighted at the unexpected arrival of his Prince - but it would never do to say so too emphatically when the cause of this arrival is such a misfortune. On the other hand, to say you were sorry to see the Prince here would be so rude as to be unthinkable. So, like an accomplished courtier, Gutierre confesses to feeling joy and sadness in equal measure. Calderón proceeds to build up his speech on a characteristically elegant framework formed by the counterpoint between these two contraries.

It is a speech that can be enjoyed on several levels at once. Its elegance is in pleasant contrast to the turbid emotional currents of Enrique and Mencía's emotions; and so its poise and balance can be simply enjoyed for their own sake. As well as a change of metre,(3) the speech offers a distinct change of tone; for a moment, at least, it pushes into the background the disordered emotional world of the two ex-lovers. Its elegance marks it out as belonging to a very different world: an ordered, hierarchical order of existence, one that stifles spontaneity, one governed by good manners and befitting decorum. As he begins to speak, Gutierre's ritual gesture of obeisance will be one physical reminder of this world; the measured cadence of the words themselves will be another. But the dark and disordered world of the emotions will not be altogether forgotten. It is merely pushed into the background, like the lovers themselves; it is a dark secret that is never quite forgotten, that remains always present and always threatens to intrude. The order and symmetry imposed by the rules of courtesy and tact proves itself in the end to be both brittle and insufficient.

For as soon as one penetrates beneath the glittering symmetries and flatteries on the surface of the speech, its actual meaning is

revealed to be almost disturbingly equivocal. Partly, this is the inevitable result of Gutierre's mania for tactful diplomacy; for, after all, the 'feeling' he purports to describe is itself a mixture of opposites:

GUTIERRE mi aliento, lince y ciego,
entre asombros y desmayos,
es águila a tantos rayos,
mariposa a tanto fuego;
tristeza de la caída
que puso con triste efeto
a Castilla en tanto aprieto; (I:321-7)

This equivocation is hedged about with yet another qualifier; Gutierre places himself at one remove by ostensibly talking not of himself, but of his "aliento". The duality of this word sets the tone for the rest of the speech. In its heroic sense, the word has positive connotations of boldness, eagerness, desire to serve; but it also carries a negative sense of vain pretension, blind ambition, puffed up pride.(4) This double-edged quantity is then further qualified by two pairs of opposites, each associated with the emotional antithesis that underpins the speech. So his "alegría" at Enrique's presence is associated with "lince" and "águila" - a kind of clear-sighted exaltation; and his "tristeza" at Enrique's fall is linked to "ciego" and "mariposa" - images perhaps for the blind, fluttering helplessness of deep grief.(5)

Yet all these images have different associations that escape the superficially flattering significance that Gutierre seems to wish to give them. The lynx, for example, was, like the eagle, a creature of proverbially clear sight - yet it was also held to be a symbol of jealousy and of envy, of the envy of the mean-spirited man who sees another with greater honour than himself and who resents it.(6)

These are all attributes that could describe Gutierre; perhaps

the most significant in this context is the association with jealousy. Mencía's reaction to this speech will be particularly important at this point; she will be anxiously wondering whether Gutierre has noticed anything untoward between her and Enrique - and the actress will need to portray this anxiety as she listens to Gutierre speak. Her anxiety may make us wonder exactly what Gutierre is referring to here - is he a lynx in his clear-sighted awareness of the deception that has been practised on him, in his envy of the love Enrique has aroused in his wife? The eagle, too, is clear-sighted, a cruel and powerful bird of prey - is this a warning to the would-be lovers?

Perhaps, too, the fire to which Gutierre refers is the fire of passion, the same fire that fuelled the flames of Mencía's phoenix. It is told of the eagle, too, that it renews its strength in the fire.(7) Or perhaps the fire is simply the fiery splendour of kingship, the lynx the symbol of one who envies the power of the great and who, again like the lynx, speaks with the forked tongue of the dissembling flatterer in order to approach the power he craves. Such power, and the tyrannical power that so often accompanies it, is also symbolised by the eagle, king of birds, soaring high in the firmament.(8)

As for the butterfly, "el animal el mas imbécil de todos los que puede aver",(9) it can be taken to symbolise the least flattering aspect of ambition, the man who is blindly foolish in his lust for power, drawn to it like the moth to the flame, and finally destroyed by it.(10)

It is told of the lynx, too, that it goes blind if it stares at the sun(11) - perhaps Gutierre's vanity has been so flattered by Enrique's presence that he remains blind to the amorous intrigue the Prince would carry on under his very nose.

So Calderón gives Gutierre some equivocal lines to speak in this decidedly equivocal situation - where the truth remains hidden and loyalties remain unclear. The speech teases the intellect, and in a wonderfully ordered and coherent fashion hints at all the complexity and confusion of human experience.

Perhaps Enrique gives a gesture that hints at acceptance of this act of homage; for suddenly all sadness is transformed to joy:

GUTIERRE ...alegría de la vida
que vuelve restituída
a su pompa, a su belleza,
cuando en gusto vuestra Alteza
trueca ya la pena mía:
¿quién vió triste la alegría?
¿quién vió alegre la tristeza?
Y honrad por tan breve espacio
esta esfera, aunque pequeña... (I:328-37)

Yet this acceptance is perhaps also mixed with a gesture that hints at departure; for now Gutierre switches his attention from the creatures in relation to the sun to the sun itself, as he begs Enrique to stay, using the most flattering terms at his command:

GUTIERRE el sol no se desdeña,
después que ilustró un palacio,
de iluminar el topacio
de algun pajizo arrebol.
Y pues sois rayo español,
descansad aquí; (I:337-41)

His argument, formerly zoological, now becomes astronomical. As the sun makes its circuit of the sky, its rays enter the 'houses' of all the planets in the celestial hierarchy, from the most exalted to the humblest. It sheds its light on all alike; at the height of noon, it lights up an exalted palace; as it sinks to the west, the yellow-golden streaks of sunset also deign to illumine the nether reaches of the sunset sky. "Pajizo", of course, suggests both the colour of

the sunset and the (poetically) straw roof of Gutierre's humble abode. The topaz was known to be a jewel whose lustre was often obscure, but which, in spite of its unostentatious appearance, was still highly prized. It was also believed to be a precious stone originally discovered by chance, just as it is chance that has led Enrique to Gutierre's house.(12)

All this is fulsome flattery heavily laced with an irony of which Gutierre may be unaware. He insists that Enrique's presence in his house will be an honour; we in the audience know perfectly well that it could be a source of great dishonour. The husband who flatters the man who has designs on his wife is an object of ridicule. One thinks of the cruel irony Lope writes into Los comendadores de Córdoba when the Veinticuatro is duped into giving hospitality to the young man who is soon to sleep with his wife;(13) or of the glee with which Don Luis, of Calderón's A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, greets the news that Don Lope, the husband of Luis' lover, is to ferry him across to an assignation with his wife.(14) The audience of his day was not in the least compassionate towards the complaisant or deceived husband; Calderón would have known that perfectly well, and is exploiting the possibilities for such hostility in this scene. The audience's first impressions of Gutierre, then, are anything but favourable.

So an ill-disguised contempt may well inform Enrique's coldly formal reply:

ENRIQUE

El gusto y pesar estimo
del modo que le sentís,
Gutierre Alfonso Solís;
y así en el alma le imprimo
donde a tenerle me animo
guardado. (I:345-9)

Calderón evokes the image of a man impatient to leave, irritated at the necessity to carry through the dull formulae of leave-taking. The string of cruel equivocations that follow are an expression of this irritation and a form of petty revenge for the hurt Mencía has inflicted on him.

Here again, Mencía's absence from the printed page tends to conceal the importance of her presence on stage. Whilst Enrique's remarks mean next to nothing to Gutierre, to whom they are nominally addressed, they mean a great deal to her. They represent a clear threat that the secret of her past relations with Enrique will be revealed to her husband. Enrique has little to lose from such a disclosure; as a Prince, he is immune from revenge. But Mencía stands to lose everything; and Enrique takes a sadistic kind of pleasure both in Gutierre's bewilderment and Mencía's mounting anxiety.

The baiting of Gutierre reaches its climax at I:374; in his bafflement, he is provoked into asking Enrique a direct question. By means of reply, the Prince toys unpleasantly with the possibility of telling the truth:

GUTIERRE — Necio en apurar estoy
vuestro intento; pero creo
que mi lealtad y deseo...

ENRIQUE — Y si yo... la causa os doy,
¿qué diréis? (I:371-5)

He is clearly picturing, with a certain delight, the devastation such a revelation would cause, and revelling in the spurious sense of power that the possession of such a secret endows him with. Gutierre, who must suspect the cause to be political, is taken aback:

GUTIERRE — Yo no os la pido;
que a vos, señor, no es bien hecho
examinaros el pecho

ENRIQUE Pues escuchad.... (I:375-8)

Enrique tightens the screw; Mencía must be terrified. Gradually, he transfers his attention to her, as his lies become more and more outrageously transparent:

ENRIQUE tan presentes mis desvelos
están delante de mí
que aquí los miro; y así
de aquí ausentarme deseo,
que aunque van conmigo, creo
que se han de quedar aquí. (I:399-404)

Here the element of double entendre is wearing very thin indeed; the only way such gnomic utterances can make sense is if they are applied to Mencía. She senses this; as if goaded beyond endurance, she steps in to guide the conversation along safer channels. In effect, she beats Enrique at his own game, taking over his fiction and applying it to her own situation. Her advice is simple, sensible, and commonplace: not to get carried away, to remain aware that there are two sides to the question; to listen, and be open to explanation:

MENCÍA Dejo
aparte celos, y digo
que aguardéis a vuestro amigo
hasta ver si se disculpa... (I:409-12)

MENCÍA cuanto a la dama, quizá
fuerza y no mudanza fue:
oídla vos, que yo sé
que ella se disculpará. (I:421-3)

So she manages to conceal her own defence under the cloak of a generalised defence of her sex.(15) Of course, the principles she is suggesting to Enrique here are the very same as those she has been trying to put into practice all along; she is not referring to some explanation she might give in the future, but to a justification that

has already occurred. But just as Enrique rejected her advice before[16] so he rejects it now:

ENRIQUE No es posible. (I:424)

- and later he will twist her words to his own ends.

One focus of Enrique's remarks has been the unexpected reversal of his fortune:

ENRIQUE pienso que esta caída
me ha de costarme la vida;
y no sólo por caer
sino también por hacer
que no pasase adelante
mi intento; y es importante
irme; que hasta un desengaño
cada minuto es un año
es un siglo cada instante. (I:356-64)

Presumably he was on his way to find a spinster Mencía in Sevilla, a woman who once was his lover and whom he hopes will be his lover again; had he arrived as he intended, he would of course have found Mencía absent. Instead, he would only have found the news of her marriage. Because of a chance fall, he now finds her in this very "quinta". So his situation has been completely reversed. Before, every instant of absence felt like a hundred years, so eager was he to see her. But, if he could not wait to see her before, now he cannot wait to be away from her.

The wife offers him some sensible advice to console him in his absence; the husband offers him a fresh horse to speed him on his way:

GUTIERRE recibid, señor, de mí,
una pía hermosa y bella (I:429-30)

In this speech, too, Gutierre shows himself adept at the art of equivocation. This horse will be unlike the beast from which Enrique

fell; it will be "pía" - in more senses than one. It will show a proper respect for its rider - and carry him safely to his destination. It will be piebald, a mare whose markings will distinguish it not merely as a horse of good breeding[17] - but also as one particularly marked out to be Enrique's own:

GUTIERRE una pía hermosa y bella,
a quien una palma sella,
signo que vuestra la hace; (I:430-32)

The palm is a symbol of victory; as a marking on the horse's back, it signifies that the horse "carries the palm" of horses, is superior to them all, and thus a fitting gift to a Prince. Its mark is like the stamp of a royal signet ring, serving both as a mark of ownership and a stamp of perfection.[18]

This marking is also a triumphal sign, a "signo" in the astrological sense,[19] a good star exerting a favourable influence on its future. So this makes it a better mount for the Prince than Diego's ill-omened beast:

GUTIERRE que también un bruto nace
con mala o con buena estrella (I:433-34)

It seems that all this is merely an extension of the kind of fulsome flattery to which Gutierre has already shown himself inclined. Yet as we have noted already, this horse is a many faceted beast, and its significance is far from simple to unravel. Enrique accepts the offer with a certain contempt (I:445-49); for him the horse means something else again. Gutierre himself may also be intending more than flattery.

A real man should be able to control a stallion, however spirited; Gutierre offers his guest a mare, and this mare is "pía", soft-spirited,

"signo que vuestra la hace". The implication is that Enrique is not man enough to ride a proper horse. He fell off his stallion at Gutierre's door, at the feet of Gutierre's wife; Gutierre offers his rival a gift that will take him safely away again. The horse is marked with a palm; marked with the sign of Gutierre's victory over Enrique. For Gutierre now has the woman that Enrique has lost. It is also appropriate that this horse be marked with a palm, when the palm is the sign of a happy marriage[20] - the happy and united marriage that Gutierre trusts is now his own.

Of course, Enrique is choosing to remain a threat to this marriage. He has rejected the opportunity to seek his own "salud", in all its senses, the opportunity represented by the image of the phoenix. The horse will be marked with a palm, the tree of the phoenix; as such it will be a reminder of the moral duty Enrique chooses to neglect. Just as the phoenix represents the risen Christ, so will Enrique's entry into Sevilla on a fine horse be a kind of sacrilegious parody of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.[21] Christ is the King "who comes to you in gentleness, riding on an ass",[22] and his entry, too, was a kind of parody: of the triumphal pomp attendant on the entry of a ruler, a symbol of his rejection of mere temporal power and acceptance of a greater triumph.

Outwith Gutierre's immediate intentions, then, there are a number of meanings that the audience is at liberty to apply to this palma,[23] all of which contain the moral guidelines that should direct Enrique's behaviour. Yet they clearly do not; and the horse, we are told, is also of a kind that particularly marks it out as Enrique's own (I:432). As Gutierre's description proceeds, we begin to receive a distinctly unflattering description of the kind of qualities that Enrique possesses.

Like any creature, this mare is a compound of the four elements - of earth, air, water and fire. But it is not a harmonious compound; one element preponderates, and this is the element of air:

GUTIERRE
A uno y otro elemento
les da en sí lugar y asiento;
siendo el bruto de la palma
tierra el cuerpo, fuego el alma,
mar la espuma, y todo viento. (I:440-4)

A description of a horse in terms of the four elements was very much one of Calderón's specialities,(24) a particular kind of description of which he seems to have been very fond, and which he was not above parodying.(25) The audience would have seen it coming; it was all very much part of what they would expect to find. Naturally, the horse's strong build would be compared to the earth, its fiery temperament to fire, its foam-flecked mouth to the breaking waves of the sea, and its speed to the wind.(26) Literati might even recall that thoroughbred horses were, according to legend, born of the wind.(27) In this horse, however, wind predominates over all: it is "todo viento". Mencía's description of Enrique on his horse placed him very firmly in the element of air,(28) the most unstable, most changeable and insubstantial element of all. Like Enrique, then, this creature is "todo viento": all vanity and fine display, pleasing in appearance, yet lacking real substance.

All this passes completely over Enrique's head. He has a very different interpretation in mind, and he makes this clear as he makes his exit:

ENRIQUE
Lo que en este lance hallo
ganar y perder se llama;
pues él me ganó la dama,
y yo le gané el caballo. (I:491-4)

This is his interpretation in print of the scene as a whole;[29] on stage, he will have expressed it already, as he reacts to Gutierre's speech. Clearly he equates Mencía with the mare, and at least in his imagination, Gutierre is not so much handing him a horse as handing him his wife, whom he has already marked out as his own. So he will find a gratifying irony in the line:

GUTIERRE signo que vuestra la hace (I:432)

- as if Gutierre was unawarely recognising Enrique's right to ownership.

Mencía, then, as far as Enrique is concerned, is the real "pía" - in the sense that she is pious enough to prefer to stand by her respectable marriage rather than be mistress to a Prince. She is "pía", too, in its other sense, no better than a prostitute[30] in her betrayal of his trust.

So his reply, although outwardly a gracious compliment to Gutierre's wit, is in fact contemptuous insult:

ENRIQUE El alma aquí no podria
distinguir lo que procura,
la pía de la pintura,
o por mejor bizarría
la pintura de la pía. (I:445-9)

By his gesture, he makes it clear that the 'pintura' in Gutierre's description is a portrait of his wife. Yet again, the outward show of polite discourse serves both to conceal and reveal thoughts and feelings that are anything but polite.

Enrique's remark is a bad joke; the gracioso takes it as his cue - one that is appropriate enough, given that the jester's traditional function is to expose the emptiness that lies behind the fine appearance of courtly behaviour.[31]

The cue is long awaited. If we are to believe the stage direction, Coquín made his entrance with his master at I:315; yet he has remained silent for over a hundred lines of dialogue. Perhaps the stage direction is at fault,[32] or perhaps the preceding dialogue has been punctuated by Coquín's unavailing attempts to speak[33] - for graciosos were not noted for their reticence.[34]

Certainly, if Coquín has been on stage all this while, a certain expectation will have been built in the minds of the audience; Calderón will have been holding him in reserve, so to speak, building up expectation so as to give his first speech the maximum impact. "Esto es más llano" (I:452) boasts Coquín, proclaiming that his wit is a welcome antidote to the complicated Gongorism of Gutierre's speech and Enrique's reply; but his joke turns out to be "llano" in more ways than one:

COQUÍN Aquí entro yo. A mí me dé
vuestra Alteza mano o pie,
lo que está (que esto es más llano)[35]
o más a pie, o más a mano. (I:450-53)

One can almost hear the audience groan. If the joke falls flat, it is because it is a hoary old chestnut they would almost know by heart.[36] It parodies the obsequiousness of his master's greeting; it would be accompanied by a gesture that would mock his solemn act of obeisance.

It was part of the tradition for the comic servant to be the comic opposite of his master; so if Gutierre represents nobility and the higher end of the social spectrum, Coquín is at its bottom, at one with the beasts:[37]

COQUÍN En hablando de la pía
entra la persona mía
pues es su segunda persona. (I:456-8)

So Gutierre, with his aspirations to nobility has no time for him;[38] but Enrique, perhaps to spite Gutierre,[39] encourages him:

GUTIERRE Aparta, necio.

ENRIQUE ¿Porqué?
Dejadle, su humor le abona. (I:454-55)

Enrique descends to Coquín's level, acts as his straight man, gives him the feed lines for his jokes.[40] Just as Coquín's disrespectful greeting to Enrique ran counter to Gutierre's marked show of respect, so his jokes all disregard Enrique's royal status and point up his fallibility as a human being. Where Gutierre takes immense pains to offer tactful condolences, Coquín offers irreverent congratulations:

COQUÍN y en efeto, señor, hoy,
por ser vuestro día, os doy
norabuena muy cumplida. (I:465-7)

- and mockingly admits Enrique to a fool's catalogue of saints.[41] Indeed, Coquín takes a fool's licence[42] to proffer a series of jokes that are not as innocent as they might appear; and could easily be taken as being highly insulting to Enrique. Enrique, like a fool, laughs heartily.

It is worth remembering that Calderón had little option but to introduce Coquín at this point. Unless he was to leave a prominent member of the company unemployed, he had to write a part for the gracioso; since the gracioso almost invariably played the part of the galán's servant, he had to bring Coquín on with Gutierre. Having brought him on stage, he could not afford to leave him hanging around with little to say - and so he had to write a speech for him. His problem, then, was to devise speeches that were both funny and appropriate to the context.

As we have seen, in part Calderón has solved his problem by following the tradition which makes the servant parody his master. But there are also signs that he has taken some care to tie in the content of Coquín's speeches rather more closely into the context.

Coquín mocks ceremonious forms of address, boasts of a bogus immaculate lineage - something of a risqué joke in the presence of a royal bastard - draws pointed attention to the fact that Enrique has fallen, and, by his mocking reference to sanctity, indicates that the fall has a moral dimension. In short, he serves to draw our attention to the uncomfortable realities that lie beneath the glittering surface of the 'serious' characters' polite conversation and he hints at a deeper moral dimension that Enrique, at least, chooses to ignore.

Enrique's closing remarks reveal the extent of this ignorance. Mencía has suggested that he listen to what she has to say in order to reach a state in which he will be able to forgive; he threatens to return and follow her advice:

ENRIQUE — Guárdeos Dios,
hermosísima Mencía;
y porque veáis que estimo
el consejo, buscaré
a esta dama, y della oiré
la disculpa. (I:483-88)

We can be sure that he intends to return not for the sake of equity, but in order to pursue the affair.(43) Indeed, the way he chooses to leave is a deliberate snub to Gutierre. He is over-polite to Mencía and ignores her husband altogether. Before making his exit, he turns to the audience and passes judgement on the scene:

ENRIQUE (AP.) — Mal reprimo
el dolor, cuando me animo
a no decir lo que callo. (I:488-90)

Enrique and Mencía share a secret that needs to be kept. To do so requires that they conceal their true feelings: that Mencía hide the remnants of her love for Enrique, and that Enrique hide his sense of wounded pride. Social obligation demands it. Here he admits that hiding his feelings does not come easy to him. He has to make an effort to do it. We may not spare him much sympathy at present; but it clearly serves Calderón's purposes to create a character whose rashness so frequently borders on indiscretion. It has created a great deal of suspense; all through the scene, Enrique has apparently been on the edge of giving the secret away.

At this point, we do not really know the consequences of disclosure. We can sense them to be painful and unpleasant, and perhaps that is all. Even though the stakes are not very high here, as the play proceeds Calderón will raise them. He will develop his portrayal of Mencía's fears, of Gutierre's devious punctiliousness, to the point where it becomes clear that what is at stake is not merely an unpleasant and painful scene - but life itself.

All of us are surely familiar with the kind of scene we have just witnessed; all of us know what it is like to hide our true selves out of a fear of hurt, a sense of embarrassment or a sense of shame. All of us know what it is like to have something to hide. We practise such deception daily, we take it for granted. We guiltily assume there is no harm in it. Yet the same forces which drive Enrique and Mencía to hide their secret are those which in the end will cost an innocent woman her life.

NOTES

(1) See Cruickshank, 'Adultery in El médico de su honra', in Studies Presented to E.M. Wilson (London, 1973), p. 46; Andrés de Almansa, Cartas... (Madrid 1886), p. 87. In comparing the King to the sun, of course, Calderon was drawing on a well-established tradition, something that had become something of a cliche. Rojas Zorrilla made fun of it in his Del rey abajo, ninguno: don García refuses to see the King because he fears he will be dazzled by his solar emanations ("afirma/ que es sol el Rey y no tiene/ para tantos rayos vista"). Yet the actual King is so indistinguished in his personal appearance that García mistakes him for someone else (ed.F. Ruiz Morcuende, Clásicos castellanos, I:161-4). In the alchemical tradition, 'sol' stood for gold - in the esoteric sense for the man who has transformed himself from the lead of common humanity and achieved self-perfection. See Titus Burkhardt, Alchemy (London, 1960). With reference to Pedro and Enrique, such connotations can only be ironic; but they gain significance in the light of Gutierre's striving towards a self-perfection in honour.

(2) Note the distinction between Gutierre's address to Enrique - "¡o rayo español!" - and the even more fulsome address to the King later on in the act (I:815ss: the King's feet are a canopy for the sunset, etc., etc.).

(3) From romance to décima.

(4) See Vanidad's speech in Calderón's La cena del rey Baltasar, ed. cit., especially lines 1098-9.

(5) Note also the "asombros" and "desmayos" of I:321. "Asombros" - presumably astonishment, amazement at Enrique's arrival; "desmayos" - from grief at his injury.

(6) The lynx became associated with envy because its urine was apparently much prized by hunters, because it would solidify into the precious substance lincurium. Knowing this, the lynx would bury its urine to prevent it falling into its hunters' hands. See Pliny, Natural History, trans. J. Bostock and H. T. Riley (London, 1855), vol. II, p. 310. Cortés, in his Libro de los animales picked up this story and elaborated it: "la envidia... es una passión del anima, y una mortal tristeza de ver al otro con honra, imaginando que es a detrimento de la suya.", Valencia, 1672, cap. XIII.

(7) According to Cortés, when the eagle feels itself getting old, it flies as high as it can, to expose itself to the full heat of the sun; then it drops down and immerses itself in cold water. Its feathers fall out; it creeps back to its nest and nestles among its children, "y dende apoco, con el calor de sus hijuelos le renacen las plumas, y se le rehaze la vista, y desta suerte remoca, y se buelve gallarda, robusta, y fuerte".

(8) See La vida es sueño, II:1034-63; Erasmus used the eagle not so not so much as a symbol of majesty, but of tyranny; see his Adagia, Chil. III, Cent. V, quoted by T.E. May in 'Brutes and Stars in La vida es sueño', Studies in Honour of Joseph Manson (Oxford, 1972), pp. 168-9.

(9) Covarrubias, Tesoro, s.v. "mariposa".

(10) A lovely use of this image occurs in Góngora's sonnet, "Mariposa, no sólo no cobarde", in Obras completas, ed. cit., p. 448. He, too, makes a comparison between the moth drawn to the flame and the phoenix. See Alan S. Trueblood, 'La mariposa y la llama: motivo poético del siglo de oro', Actas delquinto congreso internacional de hispanistas, II (Bordeaux, 1977), pp. 829-38. For another use of the image of "aguila" contrasted with the "mariposa", see Calderón's Lances de amor y fortuna in Obras completas, II, p. 174a.

(11) So to catch a lynx, hunters hang up tiny mirrors to reflect the sun. The animal stares at them and finally remains still, as if entranced; the hunters then can easily capture it. See Pliny, Natural History, loc. cit.

(12) According to Covarrubias, the stone was accidentally found by troglodytes who were actually searching for food. Pliny is the authority for this, and he suggests an ingenious etymology. "Topaz" he suggests comes from the word "topazin", which means "to seek" in the troglodytic tongue. See his Natural History, bk. 37, chap. 32, ed. cit., vol. VI, pp. 476-7. Pliny adds that in the natural world it was held to be the most precious of all jewels. It shone with a greenish gold lustre, and there may be an alchemical link here. For in alchemy greenish gold was held to be the expressive colour of the life spirit, the anima mundi animating the whole universe. See C. G. Jung, Memories, Dreams, Reflections (Glasgow, 1977), p. 237.

(13) He describes the young men in these terms: "Son mis deudos, y tan buenos que me honro de su lado" (p. 24a), when we know they plan to dishonour him. A little earlier, when his wife has come out to feign gladness at his return from the wars, he has been expressing his joy in his united marriage - when we know his trust has already been betrayed (p. 19a).

(14) III:512-3. Calderón's irony is at times utterly ruthless. Whilst the lover exults on one aside, the husband exults in another. For he is planning to murder his rival at sea.

(15) Fickleness, of course, was a constant charge levelled against women in the misogynist tradition. See Lope de Vega, Audiencias del rey don Pedro, BAE CCXII, p. 168b; Calderón's Lances de amor y fortuna, p. 171b; and his La cisma de Ingalaterra, p. 505b. Lope was very much aware of the appeal of the double entendre on stage (see his Arte nuevo de hacer comedias, 325-8) and Calderón

was adept at writing such scenes. One can see a reflection of such skills in a sonnet he wrote as a literary exercise called "Una dama da satisfaziones a tres galanes a un tiempo", noted and described by E. M. Wilson: "Es ingeniosísimo: con diferentes sistemas de puntuación, o el Duque, o Carlos, o Enrique, tiene que ser el favorecido de la dama." ("La poesía dramática de don Pedro Calderón de la Barca" in Hans Flasche (ed.), Litterae Hispanae et Lusitanae (Munich, 1968), p. 487).

(16) Cf. I:184.

(17) The ability to recognise a horse's good breeding from its markings was a traditional piece of horse-lore, and considered to be almost an exact science. See, for instance, Francisco de la Reyna, Libro de Albeyteria. En el qual...se vera las colores y facciones para conoscer un buen cavallo (Salamanca, 1580).

(18) According to Autoridades, "llevarse el palma" means to excel all others; "sellar" means "poner el sello", i.e., seal in a literal sense, but metaphorically "la ultima perfección de una cosa".

(19) The markings on a beast's back were commonly compared to the constellation in the night sky. Cf., for example, Góngora, Soledades, II:819; Calderón, La vida es sueño I:133-6.

(20) According to Covarrubias, the male and female palms grow together, side by side, and if one is cut down then the other bears no fruit. Cf. Webster's Duchess of Malfi: ANTONIO: "that we may imitate the loving palmes / Best embleme of a peacefull marriage / that ne'er bore fruit divided", Act I, sc. ii, 398-400.

(21) See T.E. May's brilliant analysis of the parody of Christ's passion in the Buscón in 'Good and Evil in the Buscón', MLR 45 (1950), pp. 319-35.

(22) Matthew 21. 4-5.

(23) To make sure we particularly associate this horse with the palm tree, Calderón draws our attention to it again as Gutierre sums up his speech: I:442, "el bruto de la palma".

(24) See E.M. Wilson, 'The Four Elements in the Imagery of Calderón', MLR 31 (1936), pp. 34-47.

(25) See Clarín's speech in La vida es sueño, III:2672-2687.

(26) Cf. La vida es sueño, "el aire es el suspiro", III:2678; or "viento el alma y fuego el pie", Lances de amor y fortuna, p. 175b.

(27) Cf. Góngora, Soledades, II:724-5.

(28) Cf. I:53-6.

(29) "lance", besides meaning incident, or unusual occurrence, is a theatrical term describing twists in the plot: "los sucessos que se van enlazando en el artificio de la comedia y forma el enredo o nudo, que tiene en suspensión el auditorio haste que se desenlace" (Autoridades, s.v.). It is not at all unusual for Calderón to have his characters turn to the audience and pass comment on events on stage, or in some way draw attention to the artifice of the dramatist. In Casa con dos puertas, Marcela interrupts herself so as not to give away the plot and spoil the audience's fun (Obras completas, II, p. 283a); Manrique in A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, announces the end of the play half way through the first act because "dama y galan se ha casado" (I: 780). The gracioso at the end of El pintor de su deshonra begs the audience's pardon because the author has made a mistake with his ending: he's finished the play with a death and a marriage (III: 1041-2). On a deeper level, it could be argued that all of Calderón's characters are consciously (or unconsciously) playing a role. See T.A. O'Connor, 'Is the Spanish comedia a Metatheater?', HR 43 (1975), pp. 275-89. Such an argument can give rise to an interesting interpretation of the play; see Bruce Wardropper, 'La imaginación en el metateatro calderoniano' in Actas del tercer congreso de hispanistas (Mexico, 1970), p. 929.

(30) The word became thieves' slang for 'prostitute' because it was Pope Pius who made a vain attempt to ban all prostitution in Rome. Prostitution continued to flourish, however; the Pope became a laughing stock, and prostitutes came to be named after him. See H. Iventosch, 'Onomastic Invention in El buscón', HR 29 (1961), p. 31 and n. 47.

(31) This is a function that Pasquín in La cisma de Ingalaterra takes to be especially his own (p. 153ab).

(32) This seems unlikely, since generally graciosos functioned almost as their masters' shadow; generally master and servant appeared on stage at the same time. But "Aquí entro yo" could be taken literally as a cue for his entrance. The effect would be comic, as Coquín suddenly appears out of nowhere and forces his incongruous presence on the stage.

(33) Just as in El pintor de su deshonra is constantly punctuated by Juanete's attempts to tell his ill-fated story "A cuatro o cinco chiquillos..." (I: 259, 335, 550, 664, 678 and II:156).

(34) Their loquaciousness was one source of their humour. For these and other traditional traits in the gracioso , see J.H. Arjona, 'La introducción del gracioso en el teatro de Lope de Vega', HR 7 (1939), pp. 1-21.

(35) The impact of this depends very much on how it is played. It might be played as a boast; there is an element here of the professional comedian pushing aside the feeble attempts of the cultured amateur; or it could be played as an apology. After all, Coquín develops into a gracioso who lacks confidence in his professional skill. He ends up pleading for a laugh he does not get (II:450-54) and eventually admitting that laughter is beyond his capacity altogether (III:689).

(36) The ritualistic formulae of greeting were an easy target for the gracioso; e.g. in Lope de Vega's La Carbonera, BAE CCXII, p. 230b; La vida es sueño, II:2249.

(37) The best example, perhaps, is the gracioso Pelayo in Lope's El mejor alcalde, el rey. He looks after the pigs, and is closely identified with a "swinish" viewpoint on life. In the beginning of Act I, lines 121ss, he and the galán are in almost direct competition with each other. The galán would need tremendous force of presence in this scene to maintain his dignity and give the scene the seriousness it requires in the face of constant barracking and interruptions from the gracioso.

(38) The difference between the two viewpoints is beautifully contrasted in the dialogue between the two in Act II:227-73.

(39) There is a contrast between Enrique and the King (I:702ss) which, one could argue, reflects badly on Enrique.

(40) I:458, 469, 473.

(41) The lunarios seem to have been a kind of Old Moore's Almanac of the day, a miscellaneous collection of odd pieces of largely spurious pieces of information, and some bizarre superstitions, to judge from the one I was able to consult: El non plus ultra del lunario y pronostico perpetuo...compuesto por Hieronimo Cortes, y agora visto, reconocido, y anadido por el Doctor Steuan Pujaçol (Barcelona, 1628).

(42) Again, just like Pasquín in La cisma de Ingalaterra.

(43) So Calderón hints at further "enredos" to come. Following Lope's advice, he leaves them till the 2nd Act.

CHAPTER EIGHT

"Tuve amor, y tengo honor."

Enrique's presence has forced Mencía and Gutierre to maintain a façade. One of the things we have watched has been their struggle to preserve the necessary degree of dignity and decorum that befits a Prince. This has been under attack on two fronts. Most importantly, the tensions generated in Enrique and Mencía by their past relationship, and by the need to conceal it, have been completely at odds with the social demands of their present situation. Mencía has had to work very hard to act as if nothing has happened. The only time she addressed Enrique directly, she needed to do so under the guise of an elaborately neutral fiction, preceded by a carefully worded deprecatory introduction, in which she takes pains to establish a properly deferential attitude in order to conceal their past familiarity:

MENCÍA Dicen que el primer consejo
ha de ser de la mujer; (1)
y así, señor, quiero ser
(perdonad si os aconsejo)
quien os dé consuelo. (I:405-9)

Gutierre, too has been making great efforts to soothe any possible discontent in the Prince (I:365-9, 371-3, etc.) and prevent Coquín from disturbing the dignity of the situation with his irrevent wisecracks. The situation has its irony in that the façade of dignity and concord that both are trying so hard to preserve is principally under attack from the very person for whom it is intended. For it is Enrique whose sadistic double-entendres continually threaten to uncover the secret existence of his and Mencía's former relationship, and it is Enrique who deliberately encourages the irreverent witticisms of Coquín.(2)

His exit is the signal for a slight change in mood. At least one source of danger for Mencía has been temporarily averted, and she no longer has to face her husband in Enrique's threatening presence.

It is significant that this scene has no equivalent in the source-play.(3) It indicates that Calderón has specifically introduced it in order that he can show how husband and wife relate to one another on their own - to give his audience an idea of how things stand between them. After Enrique's exit, one might expect a greater change of mood, a lightening, a sense of freedom from constraint. But nothing of the kind occurs. One mask is simply replaced by another.

Presumably Enrique's presence has kept Gutierre and Mencía at opposite ends of the stage. Now they can come together at the centre and embrace. In a rather pedantic, and pompous way, Gutierre says that this embrace symbolises a deeper unity:

GUTIERRE Bellísimo dueño mio,
ya que vive tan unida
a dos almas una vida,
dos vidas a un albedrío,... (I:495-98)

The unity to which Gutierre refers here is forged by a double link - by their feelings of love towards each other, legitimised and reinforced by the sacrament of marriage. It was commonplace to assert that marriage made husband and wife one flesh, and to trace this back to the creation of Eve from Adam's rib. This, at least, is the traditional exegesis of Adam's words, when he exclaims:

> "'Bones from my bones, flesh from my flesh! This shall be called woman for from man was this taken.' That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and the two become one flesh." (4)

Cervantes expresses the basics of current thought most elegantly in his Curioso impertinente. Lotario quotes this passage from Genesis in his explanation of the marriage sacrament to his misguided friend Anselmo, and he glosses it in the following terms:

"Tiene tanta fuerza y virtud este milagroso
sacramento, que hace que dos diferentes personas
sean una mesma carne" (5)

So two separate individuals live one common life, "a dos almas una vida" (I:497), as Gutierre puts it. In Cervantes' story, Lotario goes on to point out the further effects of the marriage sacrament:

"aún hace más en los buenos casados: que aunque
tienen dos almas, no tienen más de una voluntad"

That is why Gutierre goes on to claim that their wills are as one (I:498). He and Mencía are doubly united: by the miraculous bond that ties together every married couple and exists by virtue of the marriage sacrament, and by the even closer bond that exists between "los buenos casados" and consists of the complete harmony of wills.

So much for the theory on the printed page, one very familiar to Calderón's audience. The way the scene needs to be acted, however, will lead to a very different impression. Gutierre's manner and tone of voice, and the expression on Mencía's face, will make it absolutely clear that, far from a triumphant assertion of a harmonious marriage, we have a husband seeking to cajole his wife into accepting a decision he has taken and that he knows will not meet with her approval.

So Gutierre's declaration of the harmony of their two wills arises out of a situation in which they are in disharmony. He is trying to wheedle his wife's approval, not only with his mention of the union of souls, but also with an appeal to his wife's love and intelligence:

GUTIERRE de tu amor y ingenio fío
hoy, que licencia me des... (I:499-500)

Since she loves him, she will accede to his wishes; her intelligent awareness of his situation will enable her to understand why he has to

leave. He has faith in her capacity to understand no less than in her capacity to love - or so he says. For just as his declaration of harmony came from a situation of disharmony, so now his declaration of trust is put into a context that suggests distrust. He goes on to give no less than four further reasons to justify his departure.(6) The lines are skilfully written to suggest a succession of faltering excuses, offered when trying to justify a course of action we know will not be well received.

Mencía's response is to tease Gutierre about the number of excuses he has already offered and then, half-seriously to suggest another he has been eager to conceal:

MENCÍA ¿Qué cuidado
más te lleva a darme enojos?

GUTIERRE No otra cosa, ¡por tus ojos!

MENCÍA ¿Quién duda que haya causado
algún deseo Leonor? (I:511-15)

So it seems that Mencía is not the only one with a past she is eager to conceal. Gutierre does not want the embarrassing aspects of his past to be mentioned; Mencía counters with a charge of male inconstancy that is a fitting revenge for all the charges of female inconstancy laid against women in general, and against her in particular:

GUTIERRE ¿Eso dices? No la nombres.

MENCÍA ¡O que tales sois los hombres!
Hoy olvido, ayer amor;
ayer gusto, y hoy rigor. (I:516-19)

Such a scene would be a familiar one to the audience. Stage wives were always, it seems, somewhat suspicious of their husbands' forays into town; the dama was always deeply suspicious about the galán's

past affairs.(7) So the age-old debate between men and women, played out so often on the stage, would probably polarise the physically divided male and female sections of the audience into fierce partisanship. So the tensions within the audience would add spice to the tensions played out on stage.

The terms Gutierre uses to conduct his own defence would also be very familiar. Stage lovers have used such terms so often that elsewhere Calderón makes one of them exclaim that they have become merely tiresome:

ANTONIO De esos hipérboles, llenos
de crepúsculos y albores,
el mundo cansado está. (8)

Gutierre's words on this occasion strongly recall Félix' in Casa con dos puertas. Félix, like Gutierre, is trying to persuade his dama that he no longer cares about a former lover. Félix clothes his argument in fable. He asks us to imagine a blind man who suddenly recovers his sight at night. The first thing he sees is a star, and he is deceived by its brightness into thinking it to be the sun. Later, dawn comes, and with the arrival of the real sun the man is able to perceive his error. Félix says that was how it was with his first love.(9) Gutierre uses the same argument but presents his argument in the form of related experience:

GUTIERRE Ayer, como al sol no vía,
hermosa me parecía
la luna... (I:520-2)

- as if it were something that had actually happened to him. Direct statement has a certain power that imagery lacks; Félix must invent the blind man and then imply that he was like that blind man. Gutierre is seeking to bring his example closer to actual experience; presumably

Calderón is trying to breathe new life into a hackneyed idea.

This, he says, is what happened. In his ignorance of love, he was so benighted as to believe the moon (Leonor) to be the major luminary. But now that he knows what love is, he now knows that the real luminary is the sun, Mencía:

GUTIERRE Mas hoy, que adoro
al sol, ni dudo ni ignoro
lo que hay de la noche al día. (I:522-24)

Mencía obviously remains unconvinced. Gutierre is forced to stumble on, and attempt an argument that will resolve all doubts:

GUTIERRE Y escúchame un argumento:
una llama en noche oscura
arde hermosa, luce pura,
cuyos rayos, cuyo aliento
dulce ilumina del viento
la esfera; (I:525-30)

Leonor is now compared to a flame that gutters and trembles in the sphere of wind, casting a fragile light in the darkness, ringed by shadow. But with the majestic arrival of the sun, all the shadows are dispelled:

GUTIERRE sale el farol
del cielo, y a su arrebol
toda la sombra se reduce; (10)
ni arde, ni alumbra, ni luce,
que es mar de rayos el sol. (I:531-4)

All the shadows thrown by the flame shrink back below, and disappear under, the vertical blaze of the distant sun. So now the flame of Leonor neither burns with love ("ni arde"), nor lights up the world with glory ("ni alumbra") nor acts as a guide through the world ("ni luce").[11] The faint glimmer of Leonor's guttering flame is totally absorbed in Mencía's blazing light.

Again, Gutierre must be looking to Mencía for some gesture of acceptance, and again she withholds it. So Gutierre is forced to proceed:

GUTIERRE
Aplico agora: yo amaba
una luz, cuyo esplandor
bebió planeta mayor (12)
que sus rayos sepultaba: (I:535-8)

Gutierre does not, in fact "apply" his image at all.(13) He makes no attempt to expose the exact relationship between the various terms of the imagery he is employing and the components of the situation he is trying to describe. Instead, he simply tries to restate the imagery in a different form.

He does so with a striking obscurity that seems to have confounded the printer of the early editions and caused problems for the editors who have succeeded him. Calderón is using the difficulty of the language to convey the tortuousness of Gutierre's mind. When air absorbs water, the result is mist; earth, too, can absorb water, but fire and water are mutually antagonistic. The large fire has just been described as "mar de rayos" so the watery image of it drinking up, and absorbing, a smaller fire can just pass muster. But Gutierre seems to be struggling; and Mencía still refuses to release him. After another awkward pause, poor Gutierre begins again, and proceeds in fits and starts:

GUTIERRE
una llama me alumbraba;
pero era una llama aquélla
que eclipsas divina y bella (I:539-41)

Mencía's eyebrows shoot up at 539, Gutierre attempts to redeem himself in the next two lines; this is still not enough, so he must proceed:

GUTIERRE
siendo de luces crisol (I:542)

So now Mencía's dazzling splendour not only enlightens, but purifies. The faint light of Leonor is purified in the crucible of Mencía - just as the splendour of the sun absorbs into itself all lesser lights. The connection between Mencía and the crucible is strengthened by the pun ("crisol" / "sol") and the commonly accepted etymology of "crisol" from the Greek "chrysos", meaning gold.(14) Since "sol" also signifies gold in alchemical theory, the impure gold of Gutierre's love for Leonor is transformed and purified into the pure gold of his love for Mencía.(15)

Unwittingly, Gutierre has forged another link in the symmetry that exists between him and Mencía. Just as Mencía hoped that her old love for Enrique can be purified in the testing fire,(16) so Gutierre hopes that his old love will be purified and brought to perfection.

As to his argument, it finally comes back to the very point at which it started:

GUTIERRE porque hasta que sale el sol
parece hermosa una estrella. (I:543-4)

The structure of his speech as a whole is essentially circular. Gutierre has tried to make his point in no less than seven different ways,(17) and ends up having conveyed as much, or as little, as at the beginning. As an "argumento" his speech is a hopeless failure. Yet even if it had succeeded as an argument, it would still have failed its purpose. Félix' far more elegant speech also gets him nowhere. Neither elegance of imagery nor logic of dialectic are enough to ease the pain of jealousy. Both belong to different spheres of human experience. Felix' elegant pose collapses, and he ends in pleading; Gutierre's dogged persistence meets with bitter laughter. Mencía understands that his intentions may have been good, but that the end result was a failure. She mocks him for his excessive use of images, and for his pedantry:

MENCÍA ¡Qué lisonjero os escucho!
muy parabólico estáis (I:545-6)[18]

Having mocked him, she makes a show of resisting him:

GUTIERRE ¿En fin, licencia me dáis?

MENCÍA Pienso que la deseáis mucho;
por eso cobarde lucho
conmigo. (I:547-50)

Her irresolution, in a way, may be construed as a compliment, for it implies that she will be pained by his absence. But in the audience we may guess that she may be frightened, "cobarde", for very different reasons. She may fear what may take place if Gutierre and Enrique have the chance to talk away from her controlling presence, and she may well fear what Enrique's arrival in Sevilla may stir up in the way of vicious gossip, to which Gutierre will be necessarily exposed.

She conceals all this under another teasing attack, which Gutierre takes seriously - and for the wrong reasons:

GUTIERRE ¿Puede en los dos
haber engaño, si en vos
quedo yo, y vos vais en mí? (I:550-2)

He misunderstands her irresolution - and attributes it to suspicion. So he refers back to the supposed unity between the happily married couple; and Mencía mischievously takes his words at their face value. This exposes their hollowness:

MENCÍA Pues, como os quedáis aqui,
adiós, don Gutierre.

GUTIERRE Adiós.

VASE DON GUTIERRE. (I:553-4)

She wanted him to stay; and now he is "staying". Her victory is the victory of a united marriage. That was Gutierre's idea - both his image and Mencía's "victory" vanish into thin air as Gutierre walks off stage. An image has been "represented"[19] and found wanting.

In the Prince's presence, Mencía and Gutierre were playing a part for his benefit; in his absence, they play another for their own. The idea of liberation from social restraint that would have characterised a warm human intimacy is entirely absent. They have been playing the part of a married couple. Under the role playing, there lies a deep sadness.

Popular wisdom had it that the unhappily married woman sought consolation in her maid's company.[20] With Gutierre gone, Jacinta steps forward to play the role of confidante. But Mencía resists; and Jacinta has to cajole her into taking her into her confidence.

As Jacinta manipulates her mistress into giving her her trust - a trust she will later betray[21] - we may hope that now, at last, the façade that has been so desperately maintained will finally be stripped away. Perhaps at last we will get a glimpse of the truth.

JACINTA Triste, señora, has quedado (I:555)

Jacinta's remark is not simply a statement of an obvious fact - that will already have been communicated by the actress' posture and expression, at the very least - but also an implied question, an invitation to confide. Jacinta wants to know why Mencía is sad, especially when Mencía's reply indicates very openly that there is a special reason for her sadness:

MENCÍA Sí, Jacinta, y con razón. (I:556)

Jacinta's next remark, apparently all concern, also makes her curiosity just a little bit more explicit:

JACINTA — No sé que nueva ocasión
te ha suspendido y turbado; (I:557-8)

It is as if Jacinta is already aware of many reasons why the new bride should be unhappy. She hints now at an additional source of misery ("que nueva ocasión"). She pauses, awaits Mencía's response. Since Mencía is still not forthcoming, more gentle pressure is applied:

JACINTA — que una inquietud, un cuidado
te ha divertido. (I:559-60)

Mencía is still unwilling to play her part, and it takes a further hint from Jacinta, and then a final nudge, to break down Mencía's resistance, secure her grudging and weary confidences:

MENCÍA — Es así.

JACINTA — Bien puedes fiar de mi.

MENCÍA — ¿Quieres ver si de ti fío
mi vida, y el honor mío?
Pues escucha atenta.

JACINTA — Di.

MENCÍA — Nací en Sevilla.... (I:560-65)

This particular scene does have its equivalent in the source-play, and a comparison gives a clue to Calderón's intentions here. In his source, Mayor, prompted by the curious questioning of her maid Elvira, also talks of her past relationship with Enrique. She sees it as belonging irrevocably to the past, as something that is over and finished with. She concludes:

MAYOR — sólo mi honor
rico se puede llamar. (118b)

Like Mencía, except for the forced acceptance of social convention, there is nothing in her life of any value. We can see here the germ of Calderón's portrayal of Mencía. But it is only a germ; in other respects, the scene in the source-play is very different. For instance, Mayor denies that her relationship with Enrique ever had any real emotional content:

MAYOR
No tuvo más fundamento
entonces nuestra afición
que él de una satisfacción
de honesto entretenimiento. (118b)

She says that when it eventually turned out to be the case that strong feelings grew up between them, when, as she puts it, love knocked on the doors of desire,(22) it was then that she turned to marriage, to avoid the unacceptable demands that such feelings put on her:

MAYOR
viendo ya incitado
mi honesto recogimiento
acogíme al casamiento,
que fue meterme en sagrado;
que a eso me dió lugar
su ausencia (118b)

The author of the source-play has not succeeded in creating a particularly interesting, likeable or sympathetic character, nor one that can be used to develop any particular theme. So Calderón has had to modify the character quite considerably. In particular, Mayor's marriage is presented as a naive, and almost dishonest, attempt to avoid the predictably awkward consequences of her past relationship,(23) whilst Mencía is presented much more as the innocent victim of cruel circumstance.

MENCÍA
Nací en Sevilla, y en ella
me vió Enrique... (I:565-6)

The scope of Mencía's words is widened to include not just this

particular incident, but a whole life. Mencía implies that nothing of meaning or importance happened to her until Enrique met her. She played no active part in this. She did not notice Enrique: he noticed her. She is the passive recipient of his attentions, the spectator, the prisoner behind the bars of the reja watching her lover strut out his performance for her on the street below:

MENCÍA Festejó
mis desdenes, celebró
mi nombre, ¡féliz estrella! (I:566-8)

It was as if the whole affair happened without reference to her, was simply the product of chance. But it was good luck that brought her Enrique, it was a happy star, one that opened up for her undreamt of possibilities of love, joy and happiness. But all these options were abruptly slammed shut.

MENCÍA Fuése, y mi padre atropella
la libertad que hubo en mi. (I:569-70)

We know from his will that Calderón's father tried to wreck his eldest son's emotional life.(24) It is easy to guess that he may have succeeded; and the power that fathers were able to exercise over their daughters was still greater. Calderón charts the destructive effects of such paternal power, when arbitrarily exercised, in La devoción de la Cruz,(25) and it is easy to imagine the pressures placed on Mencía by her father, the atrocious choice between marriage to an older, unloved man and imprisonment within the walls of a convent. Such pressures were frequently portrayed on stage; Calderón has no need to dwell on them here.(26) Mencía "chose" the marriage:

MENCÍA La mano a Gutierre di (I:571)

Enrique's return has no more than cruelly revived memories of the old possibilities at a time when they had disappeared for ever. Now she has no hope left of giving or receiving love. She has no choice but to try to preserve what little she has - the 'honour' of her position as a respectably married wife:

MENCÍA volvió Enrique; y en rigor
tuve amor, y tengo honor. (I:572-3)

The startling juxtaposition of tenses makes it brutally clear that her love is now ended. But even her honour is in no better case. Arias knows her past. Diego knows. Enrique knows. Now Jacinta knows. None can be trusted. How long before Gutierre knows? She is dishonoured as she speaks - and the marriage that is supposed to be the foundation of this honour is, in human terms, equally unreal. We have just seen that. Mencía denies there to be any love involved in it; for her, all possibilities of love lie with Enrique, and relating to him now is impossible. She has nothing left in the present but this tragic farce of a marriage, this hollow semblance of honour. The emotion in the actress' voice would leave no doubt as to the depth of her regret.

Having seen Enrique, we may even question the value of this love. Certainly the love of which he speaks is very different from the love whose death she mourns. The most saddening thing of all is that Mencía thinks she has nothing else, that this, as far as she can see, is all that there is:

MENCÍA Esto es cuanto sé de mí. (I:574)

All the fine words have been stripped away; the last mask has finally been taken off. This is the sum of a human life; and it adds up to nothing. We are left with a stark sense of waste.

NOTES

(1) As Valbuena Briones suggests in his edition of the play, the phrase is surely proverbial. Here it achieves a delightful ambiguity; "La mujer" refers both to women in general, as in the proverb, to "la mujer" in the story Enrique has been telling - and thus to Mencía herself.

(2) Enrique is very much a stock theatrical type. Golden Age plays abound in which the second actor plays the part of a man of higher social status whose love for the dama is a disruptive force. One thinks immediately of Lope's Peribáñez, or his El mejor alcalde: el rey. Calderón was to develop this character further in the Capitán of El alcalde de Zalamea. Juana de José Prades has noted the phenomenon in works of dramatists of lesser stature, particularly Calderon's contemporary Jeronimo de Villazaín. See her Teoría sobre los personajes de la comedia nueva (Madrid, 1963), p. 76.

By the end of El médico de su honra, Enrique emerges as a distinctly anarchic figure. In his final confrontation with the King, who reproaches him for his flouting of cocial conventions, Enrique expresses an utter contempt for all such laws: "el tiempo todo lo rinde / el amor todo lo puede" (III:178-9). It is customary to think of Enrique in negative terms, as a destructive force. But he could easily be played as a sympathetic figure; he would probably be played by an actor who was younger than Gutierre, possibly more handsome. It would not be difficult for him to appear as offering a refreshing alternative to the suffocating social conventions that bind Gutierre and Mencía. For a study of Enrique's role, see Frances Exum, '"¿ Yo a un vasallo?": Prince Henry's role in Calderón's El médico de su honra', BCom 29 (1977), pp. 1-6.

(3) In the source-play, we learn next to nothing about the relationship between Jacinto and his wife. He simply bids her a brief farewell in the presence of the Prince (122b).

(4) Genesis 2. 23-4.

(5) Cervantes, Don Quijote, I, cap. 33; ed. Riquer, p. 337-8. The idea was so familiar it could be mocked in farces. In Lope de Rueda's Paso Tercero, a foolish husband is gulled by his "primo muy letrado" into taking a purgative on behalf of his ill wife: "siendo todo una misma carne, tomando vos essa purga, tanto provecho le hara a vuestra muger como si ella la tomasse", in Lope de Rueda, Obras, ed. José Moreno Villa (Clásicos Castellanos: Madrid, 1934), p. 218. In El médico de su honra the same joke occurs, tragically in reverse. The husband thinks himself ill (see II:639ss) and makes his wife take the cure (III:582ss).

(6) I:501-3 : "para ir a besar los pies / al Rey mi señor"
I:503-5 : "le conviene / a quien caballero es, / ir..."
I:506-8 : "ir sirviendo / al Infante Enrique..."
I:509-11: "ya que debí a su caída / el honor que hoy ha ganado / nuestra casa"
That last excuse is, of course, heavily tinged with irony. Calderón's verse delightfully catches the cadences of embarrassed apology.

(7) See, for example, Lope de Vega, Los comendadores de Córdoba, 23a; Peribáñez, II:1405-12; Calderón, El pintor de su deshonra, II:123.

(8) Calderón, ¿Cuál es mayor perfección?, in Obras completas, II 1628b..

(9) Casa con dos puertas p. 225b.

(10) The passage presents many textual difficulties. Here, for instance, Valbuena Briones reads "todo a sombra se reduce", a reading found in none of the early editions and one which does little to clarify the sense.

(11) Cf. the following exchange in Calderon's auto No hay mas fortuna que Dios:

MALICIA ¿Qué es fortuna?

DEMONIO Una inventada
deidad, que si bien la apuras...
en las verdades ninguna
la hallarás, pues en sus aras
nada luce y todo alumbra.

Ed. A. A. Parker, 2nd ed. (Manchester, 1962), 104-9; and see his Introduction, p. xxxii.

(12) In the early editions, the line reads "vivió planeta mayor". I follow C. A. Jones' emendation here.

(13) "Aplicar": "en la oración y razonamiento el exemplo dicho cotejarle con lo que haze a nuestro proposito" (Covarrubias); "comparar, assemejar, appropriar una cosa con otra, y traherle al propósito de lo que se dize" (Autoridades).

(14) The false etymology is accepted by Covarrubias, in his Tesoro.

(15) See A.K.G. Paterson, 'The Alchemical Marriage in Calderón's El médico de su honra', RJ 30 (1979), p. 278 and n. 31.

(16) Cf. I:144ss and above, p.

(17) I:520-4, 525-32, 532-4, 535-8, 539-41, 542, 543-4.

(18) The early editions read "paralífico"; Vera Tassis emends this to "metafísico". C. A. Jones' reading is based on a suggestion by E. M. Wilson. All readings suggest that Gutierre's pomposity is being exposed to mockery.

(19) The classic discussion of Calderón's concept of the "idea representable" is to be found in A. A. Parker's The Allegorical Drama of Calderón (Oxford, 1947), p. 65ss.

(20) Cf. the proverb "La mala casada tiene tratos con su criada", discussed at great length by Juan de Mal Lara in his Philosophia Vulgar (1568), ed. A. Vilanova (Barcelona, 1958), vol II, pp. 101-2. In the comedias, the maid is almost invariably the accomplice of her mistress in her intrigues, or, as Juana de José Prades puts it, the "consejera y encubridora", op. cit., pp. 126, 154, 174, 240. Jacinta herself is fully accepted in that role by II:321.

(21) By allowing Enrique in to see Mencía at night in the garden, in return for a promise of freedom. Characteristically, Calderón makes his character turn to the audience and draw their attention to this little piece of stage business (II:50-2).

(22) "el amor llegó a llamar / a las puertas del deseo" (118b).

(23) Or else, as she has implied in her speech, to satisfy her aroused sexual desires.

(24) See A.A. Parker, 'The Father-son Conflict in the Drama of Calderón' FMLS 2 (1966), pp. 99-113.

(25) Calderón gives Julia a particularly moving speech (I:575ss) in which she defends her right to liberty of choice.

(26) According to Malveena McKendrick, contemporary dramatists were unanimous in their defence of a daughter's "libertad de amor": "Woman should be allowed to follow her natural inclination in the choice of a husband, and parents who try to force their daughter to embark on marriage against her will must accept the responsibility for the consequences", Woman and Society in the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age (London, 1974), p. 328.

C H A P T E R N I N E

"Tomad este diamante..."

MENCÍA Tuve amor, y tengo honor;
esto es cuanto sé de mí. VANSE.

SALEN DOÑA LEONOR E INÉS CON MANTOS.

That, says Mencía, is all that she knows of her life. In a way, that is all that we, too, need to hear of it for now. Calderón has successfully established the first strand of his plot. He has made us aware of the basic situation, made us identify with Mencía, its victim, and created the possibilities for future developments. His first task is complete; he now turns our attention to the second.

> Quede muy pocas veces el teatro
> sin persona que hable, porque el vulgo
> en aquellas distancias se inquieta. (1)

Lope's advice is more than a hint at what must have been common dramatic practice - it is also a piece of common-sense advice directors are still well-advised to follow. So we can presume there to be no break between the previous scene and the following one. As Jacinta and Mencía exit on one side of the stage, Inés and Leonor enter through the other. Here again, change of costume will indicate a change of locality. Jacinta and Mencía will have been openly showing their faces, Inés and Leonor enter incognito, their faces hooded. The scene is immediately set for some kind of mystery or intrigue.

Up to this moment, the play has been a kind of gradual opening out, a slow uncovering of an opaque and deceptive set of appearances. The process reached its climax in the bleak frankness of Mencía's last speech (I:565-74). The appearance of these mysterious figures, hooded and masked, announces a new mystery, to lead to an analogous process of discovery.

We can at least guess that one of these figures is the segunda dama.

The hint that Calderón has given us in the preceding scene - quite apart from any knowledge of the source-play - makes us suspect that the woman in question is in some way connected with Gutierre.(2)

The brief dialogue between the hooded figures gives further clarification of the mystery. One of them is a petitioner, seeking audience with the King. She hopes he will redress a wrong that has been done her:

INÉS Ya sale para entrar en la capilla:
aquí le espera, y a sus pies te humilla.

LEONOR Lograré mi esperanza,
si repite a mi agravio la venganza. (I:575-8)(3)

Offstage shouts herald the King's arrival; he is not giving a formal audience but proceeding from one space to another, harassed by petitioners.

Here again, Calderón's adaptation of the source-play gives a valuable clue as to his intentions. For there the King is in his apartment, whose access is guarded; Margarita alone is allowed in to have audience with him.(4) So the short scene that follows is another of Calderón's innovations.

Every theatre-goer would be familiar with the convention that had the King, whether involved in the play's plot to a greater or lesser degree, pronounce judgement at the end of it, and impose a resolution to the problems that have arisen in the course of the action. The audience will therefore have assumed that in this play Pedro will play a similar role.

Using a King like Pedro, however, gives Calderón both an opportunity and a problem. He was to avoid both when he came to write El Alcalde de Zalamea; for Felipe II was a king unequivocally admired by his audience, and so he could count on their being favourably disposed towards him without having the necessity to introduce him earlier in the

play. But Pedro is a much more problematic figure, and the solution that such a king imposes will not necessarily be free of problems.(5) The audience will be at liberty to arrive at its own conclusions; and these conclusions will be coloured by the way the King has been seen to behave in preceding scenes. This, then, is probably the primary purpose of introducing the King in this way at this moment.

There was nothing new in using an audiencia scene as a convenient way of giving the theatre audience a measure of the stage king. Elsewhere, when he built up an entire play around the figure of this King, Lope(6) used such a device to serve as its title - Audiencias del Rey don Pedro.(7)

This is a play that is not without interest. In it, Lope is seeking to establish a woman's right to take revenge for a wrong her honour has suffered. The heroine of Lope's play, Laurencia, takes matters into her own hands, and kills the man who has raped her. But her act of revenge puts innocent people in danger of suffering for her crime; and so she goes to the King and tells him what she has done. The King arranges it so that the innocent are exonerated, and Laurencia's honour is safeguarded. He praises her highly:

REY ¡Gran valor! ¡No habrá quién crea
tan resuelto parecer!
Crédito hermoso has de ser
contra lascivos agravios;
escarmienten los más sabios
en esta hermosa mujer. (204a)

Lope is dealing with some quite controversial subject matter here; and in order to gain his audience's assent, he works hard to establish his King Pedro as a praiseworthy King who deserves our support. In the civil war between him and his brothers, he presents Pedro as the victim'of Enrique's ambition, portraying the young King struggling to gain his independence from his elders, who have him in their power.(8)

More strikingly, Lope tries to enlist our sympathy and admiration for the King by presenting him in a series of audiencias.(9) On each occasion, the young King is confronted with several difficult judicial decisions, which he deals with in a way that earn him high praise, and which recall the archetypal judgements of King Solomon.(10)

But although Calderón is using a similar device - presenting the King in audiencia(11) to give us the measure of his character - he uses it in a very different way. By the end of this scene, we are definitely not left with the impression of a King with either a praiseworthy zeal for justice or even a clear conception of what justice means. Indeed, a simple reading of the scene as it is printed can leave us with no clear idea of Pedro at all. Our problems are compounded by the deficiencies of the earliest printed texts.(12) The problems of the play's early editors reflect the difficulties of understanding the scene in print. Here, more than ever, stage production is crucial.

SALEN EL REY, CRIADOS, UN SOLDADO, UN VIEJO, Y PRETENDIENTES.

VOCES (DENTRO) ¡Plaza!

PRETENDIENTE 1 Tu Majestad aquéste lea.

REY Yo le haré ver.

PRETENDIENTE 2 Tu Alteza, señor, vea éste.

REY Está bien.

PRETENDIENTE 2 (AP.) Pocas palabras gasta.

PRETENDIENTE 3 Yo soy...

REY El memorial aqueste basta. (I:579-83)

One immediately comes up against the question of costume. The scene passes with enormous rapidity; the audience will size it up in terms of a quick impression. The 'pretendientes' could suggest "arbitristas"

of the type Quevedo satirised in the Buscón,[13] burdened under rolls of improbable parchment; in that case, any brusqueness the King may display towards them would be seen as being reasonable and perfectly justified.

But the text does not really allow us to be certain about the demeanour of the King; he could even be played as accepting these "memoriales" with an eager conscientiousness. The aside from one petitioner - "pocas palabras gasta" - rather than a disgruntled complaint, could be an admiring aside, drawing attention to a welcome capacity for speedy decision-making.[14]

SOLDADO Turbado estoy; mal el temor resisto.

REY ¿De qué os turbáis?

SOLDADO ¿No basta haberos visto?

REY Sí basta. ¿Qué pedís?

SOLDADO Yo soy soldado;
una ventaja.

REY Poco habéis pedido,
para haberos turbado:
una jineta os doy.

SOLDADO Felice he sido.

VIEJO Un pobre viejo soy; limosna os pido.

REY Tomad este diamante. (I:583-90)

Here again, the scene's presentation is absolutely crucial. The King could be seen to be gulled by the braggart and confidence trickster - apparently such a feature of the time[15] - or as showing genuine and deserved concern to two cases of obvious need. The soldier could be presented as a gnarled and seasoned veteran, worthy of reward; the old man a venerable figure, bowed down by old age and poverty, yet preserving an unaffected dignity.

Such ambiguities may in part have given rise to the very different

interpretations that the scene has received. Calderón also wrote scenes involving a ruler and "pretendientes" in which his intentions are very much clearer; and examination of some of them may give us insight into this scene.

One thinks of a brief scene in La cisma de Ingalaterra; it takes place in the third act, just before Volseo's downfall:

SALE VOLSEO, ARROJANDO A UNOS SOLDADOS QUE TRAEN LOS MEMORIALES

VOLSEO ¡Qué cansados memoriales!
Dejadme ya, que no puedo
sufriros : nadie me siga.

SOLDADO 1 ¡Qué tiranía!

SOLDADO 2 Los cielos
me den venganza de ti.

SOLDADO 1 ¡Qué cruel!

SOLDADO 2 ¡Y qué soberbio! (16)

Obviously, Calderón is making his Volseo behave very differently from his Rey don Pedro. Our sympathies are alienated from Volseo at the moment of his downfall. A little later,(17) Calderón writes a scene for King Enrique, who receives these same soldiers with an affability and courteousness in marked contrast to Volseo's arrogance.

Calderón uses a similar technique in an earlier, and perhaps less well-known play, La gran Cenobia.(18) In the first act, two soldiers present "memoriales" to Queen Cenobia, which, they say, outline their past services and describe their qualifications for the posts they seek. Cenobia receives them with kindness, but, like Pedro, postpones any decision of their claims:

CENOBIA De todo
estoy advertida ya.
Tened, amigos, paciencia,
que es el Rey quien lo ha de ver. (19)

Her reply is basically a courteous version of "yo le haré ver": nothing is decided, the soldiers are still kept waiting, yet Calderón makes it clear that they are highly impressed with her:

SOLDADO 1 ¡Qué gobierno!

SOLDADO 2 ¡Qué mujer!

SOLDADO 3 ¡Qué valor! (20)

SOLDADO 1 ¡Y qué prudencia! (21)

A modern audience might not necessarily feel so impressed; but Calderón obviously wants to impress his contemporaries. One's favourable impression of Cenobia is strengthened by the contrast between her and the tyrant Aureliano. Towards the end of the third act, Calderón writes a scene in which Aureliano gives audience. Aureliano is unequivocally bored:

AURELIANO ¡Qué cansados pretendientes!

He regards the petitioners with irritation; the wretched soldiers have the insolence to ask for rewards for their service - as if the service of serving the King was not reward enough in itself:

AURELIANO ¿Qué más premio han de tener
los soldados? ¿El servirme
no basta para interés?

Pedro's attitude is certainly in favourable contrast to that! Aureliano continues in the same vein: the soldiers complain they are poor -

AURELIANO ¿qué importa a un Rey
que haya pobres en su imperio?
Sufran y padezcan, pues;
que pues el cielo les hizo
pobres, él sabe por que.
¿Puedo yo enmendar el cielo? (22)

One has a definite sense that Aureliano deserves to come to a nasty end. This is precisely what happens. A distressed woman comes on next, pleading for help from the King. Calderón has almost rewritten the same scene in El médico de su honra; but whilst Pedro tries to listen carefully and does his best to put things right, Aureliano falls into an uneasy sleep. Again, there are echoes of King Pedro here; like Pedro, Aureliano is troubled by visions of death.(23) Well he might be; the woman in distress turns out to be the villainous Irene in disguise; she and her singularly inept partner in crime, Libio, are doing their best to assassinate the tyrant. So are Decio and Astrea. Macabre symmetry is established in the following scene, in which both pairs try their hardest, but are each foiled at the very moment of success. Finally, Decio gets the knife in; he marries Cenobia, and both are acclaimed as the rightful Imperial rulers. Everyone gets their just deserts.(24)

Obviously, King Pedro comes out better from any comparison with Volseo or Aureliano, and it would be far from accurate to claim that Calderón wrote him into this scene to convey the impression of a tyrant. But we would still not be justified in claiming that he exemplifies the 'good King'. To claim, for instance, that "King Peter in Calderón's El médico de su honra is an exemplary King who is never cruel in any way"(25) is to presuppose a knowledge of the 17th century idea of what an exemplary King would be like; it presupposes that people in the 17th century knew. To see Pedro as "Justiciero" presupposes a knowledge of what justice is; to contrast the idea of Pedro "el Justiciero" with the idea of Pedro "el Cruel" presupposes those categories to be mutually exclusive as well as a knowledge of the exact point at which the line may be drawn.

The problem of finding good government, which confronts us now with such hideous urgency, was equally at issue then. In his Tesoro, under the heading "justiciero", Covarrubias gives a neat summary of the problem:

> Él que guarda el rigor de la justicia, este tal ha de picar un poquito en cruel, porque summum ius, summa injuria.

"What is also most just, is also most wrong". The Latin epigram starkly delineates the paradoxes of government. Disarmament, we are told, is a threat to peace; the only sure promise of peace is the guarantee of total destruction. The stakes are higher now, but the basic problem remains the same: whether just government is to be founded on fear or on love.

Macchiavelli's cyncial assertion of the supremacy of fear[26] was a shrewd assessment of the direction the European world was taking. Spanish theorists, in particular, - and to their credit - made frequent and impassioned attempts to refute his arguments and establish the theoretical basis for truly Christian government. But such refutation is not easy to find; and the numbers of "mirrors for princes" reflect a deep uncertainty.[27]

It is worth looking at one aspect of one man's exploration of that uncertainty. The book concerned, Fadrique Moles' Audiencia de Príncipes, is of special interest in that it deals specifically with the question of royal audiences and was published in the same year as El médico de suh.onra.[28] Moles deals at some length with the King's manner in audience. Like any theorist with a pet subject, he tends to exaggerate its importance. As far as he was concerned, King Pedro's manner in audience was a crucial factor in his downfall:

> Aborrecio el mundo al Rey don Pedro el Iusticiero por ser azedo en sus respuestas, lo que le causo morir a manos de quien escarmentado en su odio, les dava gratas y afables (29)

His words touch the nub of the problem; he characterises King Pedro as harsh, yet refers to him as "el Justiciero". Indeed, the problem of the King's behaviour in audiences appears to have a direct bearing on much deeper problems of kingship itself, and Pedro seems to have been one focus of debate.

Luis Cabrera de Córdoba, in his De Historia, para entenderla y escribirla, first published in 1611,(30) has an interesting anecdote to tell, one that must have been fuel to the flames of the controversy. According to him, King Pedro's bad reputation is due entirely to the slanders put about by historians in the pay of his brother Enrique:

> El Rey don Enrique mato a su hermano el rey don Pedro; por abonar su infamia y mal caso, infamo la memoria con una historia que mando hazer, para justificar la causa, con los excessos y crueldades de su hermano. Mas Dios que no aprueba tales actos movio el animo del obispo de Iaen, para que hiziesse una verdadera y desapasionada historia de la vida del Rey don Pedro, que leyo el senor Rey don Felipe II, y por lo que en ella vio le sobre escrivio el Justiciero, borrando el titulo de Cruel. (31)

If Fadrique Moles' pet subject is the audience, Cabrera de Córdoba's is the vital importance of the historian. This is delightfully reflected in the moral he draws from the story:

> Por esto, deuen los Principes no tener mal satisfechos a los historiadores... (32)

So perhaps Pedro's only real fault lay in not choosing a good historian. As to whether he should have behaved differently in audience, Fadrique Moles, at least, remained uncertain. He recounts an anecdote about the Emperor Augustus, who said to one who was so afraid in his

presence that he hardly dared hand him a "memorial":

> ¿Piensas por ventura, que le das a alguna fiera? Gustaua que le amassen y confiassen del, sin ofensa del respeto debido a la Magestad Cesarea. (33)

The last caveat is an important one for Moles; he stresses that the Prince should unbend, but at the same time the Prince should not display too much human weakness:

> Grandemente deroga la familiaridad y conversacion a la autoridad y reverencia que se le deue (18r)

Almost inevitably, this leads to praise of the golden mean:

> El Principe necessita de tanta gravedad, que nadie le desprecie, y de tanta afabilidad, que todos le amen. La fuga de estos extremos es utilissima. Sardanapalo, ultimo rey de los Assirios, fue tan humano, que hasta las mugeres le despreciauan. Falario, tan severo, que aun sus hijos no se atrevian a hablarle (19r and v)

So the Prince has a difficult task on his hands; he must try to reconcile two entirely contradictory demands, "dos afectos enemigos y opuestos" (19v). Few monarchs, according to Moles, ever really rose to the challenge; but Philip II was one of them. He did succeed in this apparently impossible task, because

> nadie le fue a hablar, que a la primera vista no le temiesse, y si le hablo, no le amasse. (19v)

Essentially, Moles is advocating a rather uneasy compromise. Whether the King should be affable or stern was an approach to the much more important problem of the administration of justice. Should the King's justice be exemplary and stern, or should it be merciful and prudent? In the years immediately following the accession of Philip IV

such questions were not merely theoretical; they were the key to political power - or its loss. For one ex-minister of the late King, Rodrigo Calderón, such questions were a matter of life and death.

Political opinion during that period could be roughly divided into two parties. The first believed that the King should be stern in his justice, that he should first make himself feared, and then loved. To do the opposite, would be to show weakness, would result in a fatal erosion of the King's authority, and would allow corruption and injustice to flourish unchecked. The second party, on the other hand, advocated a softer approach, and stressed the importance of the royal attributes of clemency and prudence. The hard-liners took King Pedro as their model; they rehabilitated his memory, laid much emphasis on the stern and exemplary nature of his justice. It would be only natural for those in the opposite camp to stress his cruelty.(34)

So the controversy surrounding Pedro was directly linked to the political preoccupations of the time; and the question of the King in audience was one particular focus of this controversy. Calderón's treatment of this scene can best be understood in the context of this controversy. The fear that Pedro inspires in the soldier, for instance (I:583) would provoke a complex reaction; some would see it as laudable, others as reprehensible - and many would be undecided. It seems almost perverse of Calderón to add another level to this ambiguity by making Pedro show great brusqueness at one moment and great affability the next. One gets a sense that the scene is meant to arouse disagreement and to stimulate controversy; to that extent it may well be deliberately ambiguous.(35)

However, other characteristics of the King's behaviour are not so equivocal. His manner seems to change at I:584; Cruickshank suggests

that this is motivated by vanity,(36) but there is another aspect to it that is worth noting. The first three "pretendientes" besiege the King with their requests; their manner of asking is aggressive and persistent. In production, they might evoke a swarm of flies clustering about the King. He fobs them off; but the people he does take notice of are those who are inhibited, or unable, to come forward.

The soldier hesitates out of fear. There is a strong contrast between him and the other "pretendientes": he hangs back, whilst the others press forward. The King turns away from the "pretendientes" and approaches the soldier himself. They seek to smother the King with papers; the soldier has nothing to offer the King, no piece of paper, just the simple fact of his military service:

SOLDADO Yo soy soldado (I:585)

That is all he has to offer: a blunt fact as opposed to a paper record. The King appreciates the soldier's directness and rewards him for it. Not only that, but, far from exulting in the fear he inspires, as a tyrant would,(37) he seeks to alleviate the soldier's fear:

REY Poco habéis pedido
para haberos turbado:
una jineta os doy. (I:586-8)

As for the old man, he is helpless in his poverty and age. The King responds unhesitatingly to this helplessness and seeks to remedy it through his generosity. Moles, for all his hesitation elsewhere, was very sure on this point. He devotes a whole chapter to the subject:

> "Importa al consuelo de los pobres, que les de Audiencia el Principe... No se precie el Gouernador y Principe de que escucha la peticion justa, si no la remedia: porque esto es curiosidad, no misericordia." (38)

So the Prince must not only listen to the poor, but must remedy their ills - and elsewhere Calderón himself makes it very clear that he considers this to be the King's duty.(39) Whatever the theoretical background,(40) it is an impressive theatrical gesture. But the King's behaviour is also somewhat disquieting. The gifts he showers on the soldier and the old man are wildly disproportionate to their needs. The soldier asks for a bonus, the King gives him a commission. The old man asks for alms; the King gives him a diamond. As he gives the old man his diamond, he uses strange words to justify his action. Not unnaturally, the old man is utterly dumbfounded that the King should take a diamond from his own person(41) and give it to him, a simple old man:

VIEJO ¿Para mí os le quitáis?

REY Y no os espante;
que, para darle de una vez, quisiera
sólo un diamante todo el mundo fuera. (I:591-3)

An apologist for the King can, like Watson, discern in these lines "a worthy desire to help his poorer subjects in every way that he can"(42) - but that is surely not the whole story. The lines are heavy with an emotion that can only come from the actor's voice. It is as if the King would like to end all poverty, all old age, at a single stroke. It is as if he is so weary of the world and its suffering that he would willingly give it all away.

So once again we are left with Pedro as a problem King, as a figure whose actions can neither be whole-heartedly praised nor whole-heartedly condemned. He seems to encapsulate all kinds of problems associated with the question of the administration of justice and the institution of kingship, problems that are not simply the abstruse theories of a

dead age, but are intimately connected with a continuing longing for a just society. Perhaps, then, it is appropriate that the last of these petitioners should be dismissed with a sigh of a yearning and weary despair.

NOTES

(1) Lope de Vega, Arte nuevo de hacer comedias, ed. cit., pp. 240-2. See also A. E. Sloman, The Dramatic Craftsmanship of Calderón (Oxford, 1958), p. 290.

(2) MENCÍA ¿Quién duda que haya causado
algun deseo Leonor?

GUTIERRE ¿Eso dices? No la nombres. (I:514-6)

Mencía's "¿Quién duda?" would obviously be directed at the audience. It is not till I:617 that we discover Leonor's identity for sure.

(3) Valbuena Briones changes this line to "si recibe mi agravio la venganza". Jones' reading - "si repite a mi agravio..." - is that found in the early editions and makes perfectly good sense, although it involves an unusual sense of "repetir"; "replace my "agravio" with vengeance".

(4) Ed. cit., p. 123b.

(5) Earlier critics have tended to assume the King to be a kind of "deus ex machina" whose solution was above discussion and necessarily represented the dramatists' standpoint. Hence the idea that because the King approves of Gutierre's actions, Calderón is ultimately condoning wife-murder. Perhaps this point of view found its most forceful expression in Gerald Brenan, The Literature of the Spanish People (Penguin Books, 1963), pp. 260-1. Perhaps E. M. Wilson was the first to take a more critical view of the King's role; see his "The discretion of don Lope de Almeida" in Clavileño, 2 (1951), 1-10 (translated and reprinted in The Comedias of Calderón, vol. XIX, ed. J. E. Varey (London, 1973), pp. 17-37); see also his "Gerald Brenan's Calderón", BCóm 4 (1952).

(6) As so often, the play is ascribed to Lope more out of convenience than anything else. S. G. Morley and C. Bruerton write of this play: "we doubt very much if the play is by Lope. If it is, the outside dates are 1613-20", The Chronology of Lope's Comedias (New York and London, 1940), p. 260. See also Hispania, 19 (1936), p. 227, n. 44.

(7) Edited by Menéndez y Pelayo in BAE, CCXII. Lope had already used the same technique in an earlier play, Las mocedades de Roldán, written in 1599, first published in his Parte XIX (1623), edited by Menéndez y Pelayo in BAE, CCXXXIV. The "pretendientes" scene occurs at the end of Act II; a group of unnamed petitioners, irrelevant to the plot, petition the Emperor. As in Calderón's play, the intention is presumably to give some idea of the character of the Emperor.

(8) See don Diego's speech at p. 164b. The young Philip IV became King in 1621; one could speculate that this play was one of the series written for the young King's benefit, offering guidance and advice on the practice of ruling. See below, n. 34.

(9) Lope gives the King a long speech which begins, significantly enough, with an assertion of the importance of the King's correct administration of justice:

REY Rey que delitos abona
es indigno de ser Rey
porque ejecutar la ley
es conservar la corona. (181b)

Then he gives audience, and the petitioners come in one by one (p. 182a); this scene is paralleled with another in Act III, which eventually leads into the play's denouement (201b).

(10) See I Kings 3. 16-28; cf. Sancho's judgements when he gives audience as "governor", in Cervantes, Don Quijote, II, ed. Riquer, chap. XLV, pp. 860-5. Brecht uses a similar device in his Caucasian Chalk Circle, trans. James and Tania Stern (London, 1963), pp. 73ss.

(11) I am using the term loosely here, for convenience sake. For a discussion of the development of the historical audiencia see J. Lynch, Spain under the Hapsburgs, vol. I (Oxford, 1964), p. 5

(12) The first editions of Calderón's Segunda Parte have minimal, and confusing stage directions. QC, Q and S all read: "Sale el Rey, y soldados". Line 579 is given to "1", 580 and 581 to "2", 582-8 to "3". C. A. Jones follows Vera Tassis in his emendations to these stage directions, which clearly make more sense.

(13) Cf. El buscón, ed. Américo Castro (Clásicos castellanos) pp. 93-6; Quevedo's Hora de todos in Sueños, ed. Cejador y Frauca (Clásicos castellanos), vol. II, pp. 118-25; see also Luis Vélez de Guevara, El diablo cojuelo, ed. F. Rodríguez Marín (Clásicos castellanos), p. 123; and Cervantes, Novelas ejemplares, ed. F. Rodríguez Marín (Clásicos castellanos), vol. II, p. 180.

(14) Especially when the contemporary bureaucracy was so notorious for its slowness; something Gongora could use so beautifully in his exquisite sonnet "Camina mi pensión con pies de plomo", Obras completas, ed. cit., p. 450.

(15) Very much a stock figure. Cf. Cervantes, Don Quijote, I 51, ed. Riquer, p. 507; Novelas ejemplares, ed. cit., II p. 180; see J.P.W. Crawford, 'The Braggart Soldier and the Ruffian in the Spanish Drama of the Sixteenth Century', RR 2 (1911), pp. 186-208; and D.C. Boughner, The Braggart in Renaissance Comedy, (Westport, 1970).

(16) In Obras completas, I, p. 164a. Note the phrase "los memoriales"; this is obviously a common stage property.

(17) p. 166a. The King allows the soldiers to sack Volseo's house.

(18) First performed in 1625; first published in his Primera parte de Comedias (Madrid, 1636). The play is a splendid melodrama, full of savage energy.

(19) Ed. cit., 77b.

(20) As printed. The speech should probably be given to Soldado 1, and the next line to Soldado 2.

(21) Ed. cit., p. 77b.

(22) Ed. cit., p. 98b.

(23) Act III:235-46. This was very much part of King Pedro's habitual stage character. Andrés de Claramonte writes an utterly ludicrous scene for him in his potboiler Desta Agua no beberé (ed. A. Mesonero Romanos in BAE, XLIII). A ghost comes to him whilst he is fighting Enrique, takes away his sword and his hat (p. 524).

(24) Irene and Libio are executed at the very last minute, and so the play ends with both a marriage and an unexpected, rather problematic, act of bloody justice. Such endings are an obvious feature of Calderón's plays; we find one not only in El médico itself, but also at the end of La cisma de Ingalaterra (p. 172; the last scene is played with Ana Bolena's corpse on stage), and, perhaps most notoriously, La vida es sueño. Segismundo's imprisonment of the soldier who set him free continues to be a constant source of controversy. Calderón obviously wished to send his audience home in a thoughtful, if not argumentative, mood.

(25) See A.I. Watson, 'Peter the Cruel or Peter the Just?', RJ 14 (1963), pp. 322-46.

(26) Cf. "e molto più sicuro l'esser temuto, che amato...", Macchiavelli, Il Principe, ed L. A. Burd (Oxford, 1811), p. 292; and also "Debbe adunque un principe non avere altro oggetto ni altro pensiero, no prendere cosa alcuna per sua arte fuori della guerra... perchè quella e sola arte che si aspetta a chi comanda" (ibid., p. 277).

(27) María Angeles Galino Carrillo listed 81 examples of "Mirrors for Princes" written in Spanish and Portuguese in the period in her Los tratados sobre educación de Príncipes, siglos XVI y XVII (Madrid, 1948).

(28) Fadrique Moles, Audiencia de Principes (Madrid, 1637).

(29) Op. cit., 33v.

(30) This fascinating historiographical manual has been edited, with an introduction, by Santiago Montano Díaz (Madrid, 1948). Cabrera de Córdoba, 1539-1627, is perhaps best known for his Historia de Felipe II (1619), in which he put his historiographical theories into practice.

(31) Ed. cit., p. 91. The reference is to the portrait of King Pedro in the Escorial. For further examples of the attempt to rehabilitate Pedro's memory, cf. A. I. Watson, art. cit.

(32) Ed. cit., p. 91. In fairness to Cabrera de Córdoba, he does go on to treat with equal seriousness the responsibility of the historian towards his subject: "su pluma entierra vivos y desentierra muertos y la escritura, bueno o mal sugeto que se le fie, queda en testimonio del y de la inteligencia y voluntad del que ha escrito: y assi tenga en el escriuir gran consideracion y mire que cuando juzga esta en el juizio de Dios". This same concern for history is beautifully reflected by Cervantes in his Don Quijote.

(33) Audiencia de Principes, 18r.

(34) These issues are dealt with by Ruth Kennedy in her important article 'La prudencia en la mujer and the Ambient that Brought it Forth', PMLA 63 (1948), pp. 1131-91. These researches are continued in her Studies in Tirso I: the Dramatist and his Competitors 1620-6 (Chapel Hill, 1974); A.A. Parker notes a theological controversy that runs parallel to the political and judicial one. See his 'El médico de su honra as Tragedy', Hispanófila 1 (1974), p. 21, n. 18.

(35) This feeling of ambiguity in the King's character is discussed at length by R.J. Thiher in 'The Final Ambiguity of El médico de su honra', Studies in Philology 68 (1970), pp. 237-44.

(36) '"Pongo mi mano en sangre bañada a la puerta": Adultery in El médico de su honra', Studies Presented to E.M. Wilson, (London, 1973), p. 52.

(37) He simply accepts that people should fear him, almost as a fact of life; and there is another kind of thoughtfulness in his "Sí basta" (I:585). Soldiers pride themselves on their fearlessness; fear felt by a soldier can easily lead to a sense of shame. So there is more than a hint of defensiveness in the soldier's "¿No basta haberos visto?" (I:584). In justifying the soldier's fear, then, Pedro helps restore his self-esteem. Contrast Pedro's simple acceptance of the facts of the situation with the grossly inflated vanity of a tyrant such as Aureliano:

AURELIANO ¿Qué más bien
qué más honor, qué más gloria
hay que dejarme yo ver? (La gran Cenobia, p. 98b).

(38) Audiencia de Principes, 8v.

(39) This is particularly powerfully expressed in No hay más fortuna que Dios, ed. A.A. Parker (Manchester, 1949), especially lines 1370-95.

(40) It is extremely difficult to try to determine an author's attitude to a thorny problem of this kind on the basis of the text of a play. Robin Carter neatly points out the difficulties in his "Fuenteovejuna and tyranny: Some problems of linking drama with political theory" FMLS 12 (1977), pp. 313-336.

(41) In Lope's Los Comendadores de Córdoba, the Veinticuatro is given a ring by King Fernando. This is presented as a gesture of tremendous significance, and Lope gives him a good long speech to express the honour he has just received (ed. cit., p. 96). So I suspect that Pedro, almost casually, giving his ring to a perfectly insignificant old man would be perceived as quite a startling, almost shocking gesture.

(42) Characteristically, Macchiavelli said that if you had to be generous, it was best to be generous with other people's property and not your own, since that was the way to gain a reputation for liberality at other people's expense. See Il Principe, ed. cit., p. 289. Moral theorists stressed the importance of spending one's own property; see A. I. Watson, art. cit., p. 330. Elsewhere in the same article, Watson stresses the importance given to the virtue of princely generosity: "liberality...so often heads the list of kingly virtues in the de regimine principum treatises of the period"; but D. W. Cruickshank indignantly denies this in his fiercely anti-Pedro article "Calderón's King Pedro - just or unjust?" in Spanische Forschungen de Görresgesellschaft, 25 (1970), p. 10.

C H A P T E R T E N

"Pedro, a quien llama el mundo Justiciero..."

En el acto primero ponga el caso... (1)

We need to return for a moment to our original question. How does the playwright communicate the essential facts of his "caso" to his audience? Mencía's was presented to us in instalments; Leonor's is now to be communicated in a single speech. Calderón needs to establish a suitable setting for that speech; so he has brought the King onto the stage, and the King has been dealing with petitioners. So the scene we have just considered has established the necessary setting for Leonor's speech - and it has also given us some idea of the quality of the King to whom it is addressed.

As we have seen, it is most likely that Calderón has tried to present us with a problematic King whose actions it is difficult to evaluate, and who therefore stimulates the critical awareness of his audience. Such a critical awareness will be as necessary in this coming scene. Leonor presents the King with a problem of judgement. She claims to have been unjustly treated; she has come to seek redress. The King must evaluate her words before he can decide what action to take. But this task of evaluation is not simply the King's alone; it is ours also.

This becomes very apparent when we take note of the fairly extensive modifications to the source-play.(2) The contrast between the two scenes is a most instructive one. Watson has been quick to point out some of the ways in which these modifications work in Pedro's favour.(3) In the source-play, for instance, Margarita has to ask specifically for the room to be cleared whereas Calderón gives his Pedro the perceptiveness and tact to recognise the confidentiality of the information Leonor has to disclose, and so have the room cleared without her asking. Leonor is able to gain relatively unrestricted access to the King, whilst Margarita is made to struggle past several unsympathetic

guards and soldiers.(4) Such doorkeepers were not in the least popular; Moles, for one, has some very harsh things to say about them.(5) He insists on the importance of open access to the King; indeed, he devotes a whole chapter to the subject:

> Los principes y ministros han de tener patentes las puertas, escusando la dificultad que ponen los porteros. (6)

His insistence may not be altogether practical, but it certainly reflects a popular sentiment. It also reflects deeper aspirations; there is a wonderful fairy-tale quality about the King who listens to the private tragedies of his subjects and then does his best to set them right. Such aspirations were often reflected on the stage;(7) at this moment, at least, Pedro seems to belong to a hallowed tradition.

The King of the source-play does his best to help Margarita, too, but he does so for obviously dubious reasons. He obviously finds her sexually most attractive; her beauty makes him feel absolutely furious on her behalf:

REY
¡Qué haya quién a tí te enoje!
Habla, que ya el pecho mío
me muestra en exhalaciones
de mi cólera, el castigo
que he de dar a quien se opone
a eclipsar tanta hermosura,
a hacer llorar dos soles. (8)

Contemporary theorists laid great weight on the fact that the tears of a beautiful woman could have a detrimental effect on the impartiality of even the strictest of judges; Don Quijote quotes them when he warns Sancho, as he is about to embark on his gobernatorial career:

> Si algún mujer hermosa viniere a pedirte justicia, quita los ojos de sus lágrimas y tus oídos de sus gemidos, y considera de espacio la sustancia de lo que pide, si no quieres que se anegue tu razón en su llanto y tu bondad en sus suspiros. (9)

The King of the source-play prejudges the case in Margarita's favour even before he has heard her speak. But Calderón makes his Pedro rather more cautious. The source-play King ignores don Quijote's most sensible advice; Calderón's King Pedro makes an attempt to follow it. To be sure, he does take note of her beauty, but in a sympathetic rather than lascivious manner:

REY Si vinisteis
de parte del honor, como dijisteis,
indigna cosa fuera
que en público el honor sus quejas diera,
y que a tan bella cara
vergüenza la justicia le costara. (I:603-8)

Like the source-play King, he feels for Leonor in her misfortune:

REY Señora, vuestros enojos
siento con razón, por ser
un Atlante en quien descansa
todo el peso de la ley (I:673-6)

But his natural sympathy does not make him lose his head; he does not commit himself to any particular course of action until he has heard the full facts:

REY Oigamos a la otra parte
disculpas suyas; que es bien
guardar el segundo oído
para quien llega después (I:685-8)

But besides being a reflection on the character of the King, this is also a reflection on the nature of the evidence that confronts him. In the source-play, things are very much cut and dried. Margarita

says that once don Jacinto had overcome her resistance to his advances,[10] they lived together for three years. He also gave her a written promise of marriage, signed and sealed, that Margarita is able to hand over to the King.[11]

Calderón makes Leonor very much vaguer. She has no legal documents to deliver, but only a report of a verbal promise:

LEONOR Dióme palabra que sería mi esposo (I:649)

This nebulous promise led, not to three years' open cohabitation, but to a private consummation of what public opinion had already assumed to be an accomplished fact:

LEONOR
la publicidad a tanto pasa,
y tanto esta opinión se ha dilatado,
que en secreto quisiera más perdella,
que con público escándalo tenella. (I:661-4)

Such a fine distinction between what is publicly accepted to be true and what is actually the case seems to permeate Leonor's speech, which seems also to be more than a little tinged with the deep cynicism those words imply. One is left with the uneasy feeling that all may not be altogether as it appears.

Her opening remarks, for instance, are suffused with ironies. Naturally enough, she addresses the King as "Justiciero". But it seems that it is the retributory aspects of Justice that particularly appeal to her. It is as if she almost wishes to appeal to the cruel Pedro of the dark legend:

LEONOR
Pedro, a quien llama el mundo Justiciero
planeta soberano de Castilla,
a cuya luz se alumbra esta hemisferio;
Júpiter español, cuya cuchilla
rayos esgrime de templado acero,
cuando blandida al aire alumbra y brilla;
sangriento giro, que entre nubes de oro,
cortó los cuellos de uno y otro moro. (I:609-16)

There is more than a touch of cynicism about her opening line. Leonor is apparently implying that there is a distinction to be drawn between the "Justiciero" the world acclaims in public, and the "Cruel" whose cruelty is whispered about in private.

If Justice has a place in her words, it seems it is only as an epithet of flattery. Leonor seeks to emphasise, not so much the justice, but the power of this just monarch, this "Justiciero", by calling him "Jupiter" and "sovereign planet". She betrays her real wishes in the image she paints of this powerful justice in action. She seeks revenge, and she emphasises to the King the fact that he has the most power to give her that revenge. So this Jupiter is described in his capacity of Thunderer, whose swordblade flashes thunderbolts of tempered steel down on the transgressor. Jupiter the Thunderer is combined with Apollo God of the Sun.(12) The sun rises in the sky amidst clouds of gold - an image of the dawn, perhaps too an image of immense wealth - and the Sun God in his chariot wheels round the heavens in a "sangriento giro", a bloody circuit of the sky, slashing off the heads of Moors as he passes. So Jupiter's fearsome thunderbolt is used as an image of the royal sword slicing through the necks of Moors rather as a butcher's cleaver cuts through dead meat.(13) This somewhat bloodthirsty imagery seems to hint at her real wants: she wants Gutierre to be the next victim of this kingly god's lightning sword. That, as far as she is concerned, would be true justice.

Particular ironies arise when we compare the historical Pedro to this mythical King portrayed by Leonor's words. She says the world calls him "Justiciero": the audience knows, just as she hints, that the world also calls him "Cruel". Anyone who had read Mariana's Historia de España(14) - provided they believed it - would also know that he was hardly ever, if at all, "planeta soberano de Castilla".

He spent most of his time away from Castilla, in Sevilla. When he was not under the thumb of one of a succession of favourites he was in dispute with at least one of his brothers over the control of his kingdom. Far from being wealthy, he was perpetually short of money; far from expending his energies on the reconquest of Spain from the Moors, he spent most of his time, his energy and his resources fighting hugely destructive civil wars against his brothers and against the King of Aragon. Far from being in enmity against the Moors, he was often friendly with them, enlisted their aid in his civil wars, built his palace in their style of architecture, and held in great confidence the advice and predictions of a Moorish astrologer. He was no Jupiter, since he rarely, if ever, had the whole of his petty Kingdom under complete control; and no Apollo either. His reign was compared by Mariana to a time of darkness, relieved only when the coming of Enrique brought a new dawn to the stricken kingdom.

All this makes Leonor's grandiloquent flattery sound rather hollow. It is also distinctly anti-climactic. Leonor invokes the awful power of the King's justice; but by the end of her speech it becomes clear that she is not in fact interested in thunderbolts in any shape or form. In fact, what she is after is something far more prosaic:

LEONOR si sobre tu piedad divina, sobre
tu justicia, me admites generoso,
que me sustente en un convento pido (I:669-71)

All she wants is for the King to force the man to pay her a kind of alimony to enable her to lead a moderately comfortable life in a convent.

This is something of a feature of Leonor's speech. Calderón has given her a verse-form to suit the solemnity of the occasion; the

octavas are sonorous, majestic, with their sense beautifully tailored to coincide with the ending of each stanza - yet in them the tremendous rubs shoulders with the utterly banal. When she introduces herself, for instance, she modestly admits that she is known as Leonor "la bella" (I:618), and bashfully disclaims any real pretensions to beauty. If she is called beautiful, she pathetically insists, it is merely because she has been unfortunate, for beauty and misfortune go hand in hand:(15)

LEONOR — No porque fuese la hermosura mía
quien la nombre adquirió, sino la estrella;
que quien decía bella, ya decía
infelice, que el nombre incluye y sella,
a la sombra no más de la hermosura,
poca dicha, señor, poca ventura. (I:619-24)

But this pathetic effect, achieved with such striking elegance, must surely be shattered by the bathos of the puns that follow immediately after it:

LEONOR — Puso los ojos, para darme enojos,
un caballero en mí, que ojalá fuera
basilisco de amor a mis despojos...! (I:625-8)

It may be amusing to say that the man hit her between the eyes when he made eyes at her, and then develop the pun further with "ojalá" and "despojos" - but it is hardly the effect that suits the purposes of a woman seeking to arouse pity for her helplessness.

Calderón achieves a similar effect in the next octava. After I:625, the verse begins to pick up its emotional momentum again, so that soon it is becoming clear that the actress' voice and manner are conveying great emotion:

LEONOR — ¿Con qué razones, gran señor, herida
la voz, diré...? (I:633-4)

The verse moves up to a climax:

LEONOR De obligada pasé a agradecida,
luego de agradecida a apasionada; (I:637-8)

- and we must imagine the especial emphasis in the actress' voice on the word "apasionada". But then the climax dissolves into a joke:

LEONOR que en la universidad de enamorados
dignidades de amor se dan por grados (I:639-40)

The image is absurd. Obviously it does not make sense to compare the fluidity and instability of human emotions with the fixed gradations of the bachillerato. What it does express is the absurdity of love's literary stereotype, and the pseudo-erudition of its conventional love-poetry.(16)

This is all very well, but it hardly suits Leonor's purposes. She should not be bothering to expose literary stereotypes - she should be trying to arouse pity. She should be seeking to portray herself as the innocent victim of an uncontrollable passion. The fact that Calderón refrains from giving her the kind of lines she would surely need were she to move us to pity indicates that he is aiming for a very different effect. It is as if we are not to be involved in what she is saying, or to be moved by it, but placed at a distance from it, to evaluate it.

The rhetoric resumes in the next stanza; having just mentioned the schoolroom, it is perhaps appropriate that Leonor's words should allude to a hallowed Renaissance theory:

LEONOR poca centella incita mucho fuego
poco viento movió mucha tormenta,
poca nube al principio arroja luego
mucho diluvio, poca luz alienta
mucho rayo después... (I:641-5)

At the core of all this is an Aristotelian belief, reiterated by Cusanus, amongst others, that "minimal spaces may conceal maximal forces"[17] and that

> elemental forces have the smallest extension and the greatest power...The force inherent in a spark is that of the whole fire. (18)

So Leonor's love may have sprung from paltry beginnings, but their insignificance did not prevent them enclosing powerful forces of destruction, that, all unwittingly, she unleashed into her own life with disastrous effect.

Her verse expresses this with some rhetorical force; but here again, the effect of these lines is dissipated in the line which follows:

LEONOR Diome palabra que sería mi esposo (I:649)

This is tremendously banal; it is the oldest story in the world.[19] It surely must carry no emotional weight at all. In the following lines, Leonor again has recourse to rhetoric; she evokes Erebos, parent of "chaos and black night";[20] calls up Hades and Cupidus pescator[21] to come to her aid. The cunning love-god baits his hooks with that darkness of passion that lulls the senses and deceives the intellect[22]... but then words fail her:

LEONOR El labio aquí fallece, y no me atrevo
a decir que mintió. No es maravilla.
¿Qué palabra se dio para cumplilla? (I:654-6)

Here again, the words point to the way in which the speech is to be acted. Leonor hesitates, is fearful. One could charitably ascribe her hesitation to the fearful consequences of calling a gentleman a liar[23] - or cynically argue that she is faltering before committing herself irrevocably to an outright lie. Her own cynicism hardly inspires

confidence.

The rest of her story is quickly told. Having obtained a promise of marriage, she let him into her house; having let him into her house, it came to cost her less effort to be a secret sinner than defend a virtue public opinion had already denied her. She took him to court, but lost her case. She asserts this is not a reflection of her guilt, but of the corruption of the court:

LEONOR Pedí justicia, pero soy muy pobre;
quejéme dél, pero es muy poderoso (I:665-6)

The simplicity of the lines speak her case more eloquently than any florid rhetoric. From what we, and the audience, know of the courts, this is quite likely to be true. Her lack of family, wealth or position leave her defenceless in a world in which money, in particular, counts for more than justice or truth.(24) She must have recourse to the King, for she has no-one else to defend her.(25) It is the King's duty to succour the helpless. Judicial theorists were most emphatic in their belief that the tears of the innocent and the helpless should be dried, that no Christian king should let their lament go unheeded. Moles expresses himself very strongly on this point:

> Quando se ven lagrimas, y agravios de inocentes,
> sin tener quien vuelva por ellos, es caso mas terrible
> que el morir, o nunca aver nacido. (26)

Whether Leonor's are really the tears of the innocent, and so whether they really deserve to be dried, is a moot point. Calderón has written the speech most carefully to make it difficult for us to come down either way.

So the King's prevarication is quite understandable. His speech is filled with uncertainties. His is the responsibility to see that

justice is carried out, and, as we have already seen,[27] he feels the task to be a heavy one:

REY Señora, vuestros enojos
siento con razón, por ser
un Atlante en quien descansa
todo el peso de la ley. (I:673-6)

That, of course, is as it should be. The King should be willing to take on his shoulders all the griefs of his subjects as if they were his own. Kings should be aware of the onerous nature of their duties, and should be fully prepared to shoulder them.[28] This King, it seems, is conscientious; he is determined to fulfil his duty. He recognises that justice cannot be executed on the strength of one point of view alone, that it is essential for the impartial judge to hear both sides of a given case before pronouncing judgement on it. This he intends to do; he is shocked to hear that justice could be executed on the grounds of interest rather than equity, and is determined to ensure that such abuse is rectified:

REY fiad, Leonor, de mi,
que vuestra causa veré,
de suerte que no os obligue
a que digáis otra vez
que sois pobre, él poderoso,
siendo yo en Castilla rey. (I:689-94)

Moles would have approved of the King here; like so many other commentators, he points out that Kings are far more likely to hear flattery than accept an unpleasant truth. So it is important for a King to be able to hear and accept statements that are not flattering, that may even contain criticism of him. Instead of punishing Leonor for telling him, to his face, that his courts are corrupt - as a tyrant would have done - Pedro seeks to remedy the situation that gave rise to the adverse comment.[29]

He is also showing a kind and sensitive understanding of Leonor's predicament, a warm sympathy for her in her trouble. Yet, quite properly, he is also concerned that no natural human feeling of warmth towards the victim should interfere with the necessary impartiality so important if justice is to be done.

All this is undoubtedly true if we accept the King's words at their face value. The extent to which we do so will undoubtedly depend to a great degree on the way in which the scene is played. Nonetheless, it is hard to stop doubts creeping in.

The King calls himself Atlas; and Atlas was one of the giants who attacked Mt. Olympus. He was given the task of carrying the sky on his shoulders as a punishment for his rebellion.(30) So, as Cruickshank points out, he was "not only a symbol of strength, but also of pride and presumption".(31)

There may even be an echo of the incident with the old man of the previous scene, when Pedro seemed only too eager to rid himself of his heavy burden. Atlas, too, was always trying to unload his burden onto somebody else.

Perhaps "todo el peso de la ley" refers not to the responsibility of the law-giver, but to the dreadful punishments that the law can mete out to the guilty offender. But dreadful punishment is not at stake here; all that is involved is financial settlement.

In any case, the apparent kindness of the King's words cannot disguise the fact that his response must disappoint Leonor's expectations. Surely the scene she wanted would have had the King exploding in fury against Gutierre.(32) Instead, he prevaricates. He does not promise her either payment or revenge - instead he suddenly hides her behind a curtain,(33) as if she were a guilty secret in a comedy. But she is

not a guilty secret; she is the injured party. One might expect her role to be a little more dignified.

That is not the only expectation this scene disappoints. For one might also have expected, in such a scene, to operate under the comfortable convention that the exposition told by the character concerned represents the truth. In La cisma de Ingalaterra, for instance, when King Enrique explains the salient circumstances of his reign,(34) the truth of what he is saying is not really ever called into question. We can just take his words at their face value.

Here, as we have seen, things are not so simple. We have to face the uncomfortable possibility that Leonor may be lying. It is hard to believe her, and hard to disbelieve her. Her words are by no means the only puzzle we must unravel. Before she even began to speak, we were given a dramatic image of a problematic and puzzling King - one whose actions we could neither wholly approve nor wholly condemn. Now, after Leonor has spoken, the image has not become much clearer.

For as his speech proceeds, apparent sympathy turns into apparent duplicity. The reason he gives for hiding her is particularly opaque:

REY Mas Gutierre viene allí;
podrá, si conmigo os ve,
conocer que me informasteis
primero. Aquese cancel
os encubra, aquí aguardad,
hasta que salgáis después. (I:695-700)

Gutierre is bound to guess that she has already complained to the King(35) - and besides, it is difficult to understand why it should be important for the King to conceal that from him. His instructions to Leonor, too, are suspiciously vague ... exactly when is she to come out? We are given an uneasy sense that the King is concealing his real intentions.(36)

It may be possible that Leonor's veracity is to be put through some new test that the King is concealing from her - but that is not to be made finally clear until much later on.(37)

So, if we are used to accepting speeches of exposition at their face value, our expectations are to be challenged. We are given a further sense of a world in which we can take nothing as given, and nothing for granted. All is to be questioned; every assumption and every statement is to be put to the test.

NOTES

(1) Lope de Vega, Arte nuevo de hacer comedias, ed. cit., p. 299.

(2) Cf. A. E. Sloman, Dramatic Craftsmanship of Calderón (Oxford, 1959), p. 43.

(3) Cf. A. I. Watson, art. cit., p. 341.

(4) Lope de Vega (?) El médico de su honra, ed. cit., p. 123b

(5) Audiencia de Principes, 5r.

(6) Ibid., 28r-33r. For Moles, the denial of the subjects' right to access to their ruler denoted the fearfulness of the tyrant.

(7) Perhaps most notably in Lope de Vega, El mejor alcalde el Rey. The element of wish-fulfillment is expressed even in the title; the King is source of supreme power, yet he is also alcalde. The cycle of Hārūn al-Rashīd stories in the Alf Layla wa layla probably represents another strand of this same longing; and Pedro himself is to recall Hārūn in his nightly wanderings incognito round the town (see II:383-420).

(8) Ed. cit., 124a. Note the indication of how the scene was acted; the King's chest is heaving up and down in the intensity of his emotion. He mentions Margarita's beauty on no less than three other occasions: 124a, 126a, 137a.

(9) Cervantes, Don Quijote, II, ed. Riquer, chap. 42, p. 842. Cf. also Moles, Audiencia de Principes, 44r: "no ay...mas fuertes razones que las lágrimas de una muger no fea".

(10) This is a long story, taking up 112 lines of rather turgid verse (ed. cit., 124b-125b). One of the ways Calderón has improved on the original has been to cut out a great deal of extraneous material. Another change worth noting has been in the timing of the announcement of the man's name. Margarita tells the King at the very beginning who it was; Calderón keeps us in rather more suspense - although we can easily guess that Gutierre was involved - saving up the actual disclosure of his name to the very last line of her speech.

(11) MARGARITA después de darme
una cédula del nombre
suyo, firmada de ser
mi esposo (125b)

This somewhat prosaic revelation sounds rather strange in the romantic context in which it is put; a little later she hands the cédula over to the King and demands justice.

MARGARITA ¡Justicia, Pedro; no borres
de las alas de la fama
tu justísimo renombre! (126a)

(12) The first editions read "para vos y Dios Apolo". This is the first of a curiously concentrated set of misprints (I:599, 609, 614, 618) occurring in all three of the early editions.

This particular misprint could just be defensible. It would not be altogether inappropriate for Leonor to call Pedro "Apollo" here. Apollo is God of the Sun; Pedro is the "sun" of Castilla (I:610). Apollo is god of healing; Pedro will, Leonor hopes, cure her of her dishonour. When it comes to his turn to complain to the King, Gutierre, too, will call the King "español Apolo" (III:5). All this forms part of what Cruickshank has called "the idolatrous atmosphere" built up around Pedro (in "Adultery in El médico de su honra", Studies...presented to E.M. Wilson (London, 1973), p. 47).

(13) "cuchilla" has a sense of the cleaver, rather than simply the sword.

(14) Mariana's Historia de rebus Hispaniae was first published in Spain in 1592; his Castillian version appeared in 1601. His account of the reign of King Pedro can be found in BAE, XXX, pp. 480-519.

(15) This idea is a common cliché; cf., for example, Lope de Vega (?) El medico de su honra, ed. cit., 122a; Lope de Vega, Peribáñez, ed. cit., I:85; Gracian, El Criticón, II, cr. 6 (ed. Evaristo Correa Calderón (Clásicos Castellanos), vol. II, p. 156).

(16) Calderón makes Laura of Casa con dos puertas explain the shortcomings of the image very neatly:

LAURA amor, para ser sabio,
no va a la universidad..
y así en su curso verás
que los que la cursan más
son los que la saben menos. (In Obras completas, II, p. 285b)

Cf. also Tirso de Molina, El melancólico, ed. cit., p. 62.

(17) A belief impressively illustrated by gunpowder; see Cusanus, De ludo globi, II, quoted by Edgar Wind, Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance, 2nd ed. (London, 1967), p. 109.

(18) Edgar Wind, op. cit., p. 221.

(19) Cf., for example, Dorotea's account of her wooing by Fernando in Cervantes, Don Quijote, I (ed. Riquer), chap. 28, pp. 278ss.

(20) Hesiod, Theogony 116; translated by A. W. Mair in Hesiod, Poems and Fragments (Oxford 1904), p. 35; cf. Ovid, Metamorphoses, XIV, 404.

(21) Love as the cunning fisherman was the subject of many emblems; cf. Tirso de Molina, El Burlador de Sevilla, ed. Américo Castro (Clásicos Castellanos), I, 375-516; and John Donne's poem, "The Baite" in Complete Verse and Selected Prose, ed. John Hayward, 10th imp. (London, 1967), p. 34.

(22) For a different account of this difficult passage, see C. A. Jones' edition, p. 25, n. 2.

(23) Of course, any gentleman accusing another of being a liar would inevitably get involved in a duel. Cf. A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, ed. cit., I:197-220.

(24) The theme of Quevedo's famous poem "Poderoso caballero es don dinero", in Obras completas: verso, ed. L. Astrana Marín, (Madrid, 1943), p. 73.

(25) Normally, a male relation would defend her honour; because she has none, she must have recourse to the King. See M. Wilson, 'Comedia Lovers and the Proprieties', BCom 24 (1972), p. 34.

(26) Audiencia de Principes, 45v.

(27) Cf. I:591-3.

(28) Cf.: "El Rey parte es Leon, feroz, y horrendo
De quien el mundo todo esta temblando,
Y manso buey, del medio cuerpo abajo,
Nacido para el yugo, y el trabajo."

in Sebastián de Covarrubias Horozco, Emblemas Morales, first published 1610, facsimile reprint, Scolar Press, 1973.

(29) Cf. Audiencia de Principes, 11r-15r. Those in power, of course, continue to listen to, and advance the interests of, those who are inclined to follow their point of view.

(30) See Pérez de Moya, Philosophia Secreta (Los Clásicos Olvidados), vol. II, pp. 167-9.

(31) Cruickshank, art. cit., p. 54.

(32) This is more or less what happens in the source-play. The King expresses strong support for Margarita, declares himself vexed with don Jacinto. Although he also hides Margarita, it is with a much more positive promise of a favourable response:

REY Como te amparo verás. (128a)

(33) She will presumably hide in the "discovery area", behind the curtain at the back of the centre of the stage.

(34) In Obras Completas, I, pp. 143b-4b.

(35) As indeed he does at I:870-1.

(36) The King's intentions are very much clearer in the source play; see note 32 above.

(37) The King offers the audience an explanation at I:904-10.

C H A P T E R E L E V E N

"hagamos los dos un concierto..."

The next scene may come as something of a surprise.(1) It is not altogether what we have been led to expect. Instead of Gutierre, we get Coquín; instead of a solemn judicial scene in which the King confronts Gutierre with Leonor's allegations, we get a comic, undignified scene in which the King bets Coquín he cannot make him laugh.

The audience probably laughs at Coquín as soon as he saunters on - his entrance is so incongruous, for one thing, and, for another, the gracioso is a figure we expect to find funny. His job is to make us laugh; Calderón helps him achieve this by giving him all the stock-in-trade of the traditional gracioso - his fearfulness, his impudent patter, his cheekiness and his puns.(2) The King's bet adds a new dimension to his fooling; it makes the jester's role a kind of spectacle in itself, holds it up to the light, as it were, for our inspection.

But the gracioso's role is not the only one that is held up for our examination. We are also made aware of the role of the King - and in particular of the King as a kind of play actor. Such an almost theatrical awareness of the idea of the King as a player was not unusual; we find Queen Elizabeth I reminding her courtiers that

> "Princes, like actors, stand upon a stage in the sight of all the world. The least blemish, the slightest stain upon their costume or their honour, is visible to a multitude of spectators, both enemies and friends." (3)

Of course, the image of the world as a stage was a commonplace, both in Shakespeare's England(4) and seventeenth century Spain.(5) With the whole world a stage, Princes and Rulers were not exempt from the rule that we are merely players. In particular, the idea of the player-king found its expression in some unexpected settings. For example, in the same year as El Médico de su Honra's publication, Philip IV entertained the Princess of Carignano. The festivities included a

palace performance of a play, and one contemporary account makes it clear that this was conceived as a double spectacle. The Princess was to be treated to the sight of the King on the stage, at the same time as the King in the flesh - to a doubly dramatic spectacle. Her seat was carefully chosen to give her the best view of these two styles of acting -

> que pudiesse ver su Alteza como en idea en los reyes
> la representacion, y por accessorio lo representado
> en la comedia. (6)

There is a strong possibility that El médico de su honra was itself performed in the palace - and later on we will be discussing the dramatic possibilities of such a performance. For now, it is enough to note that in this scene both the role of the gracioso and the role of the King are brought to our attention.

Almost the first words Coquín is given to speak serve this function. Here again, the words serve to underline what we have already witnessed in the actor's performance. For the King, too, is taken by surprise at Coquín's unexpected entrance. Like ourselves, he has been expecting Gutierre, and will have adopted a suitable pose with which to receive him. Coquín's sudden appearance catches him off his guard, and for a moment the mask of royalty slips. He hastily adopts a new expression - but Coquín has caught him at it - and his words draw this to our attention:

COQUÍN ¡válgame Alá!
¡Vive Dios, que está aquí el Rey!
Él me ha visto, y se mesura. (I:705-7)

Of course, Coquín is frightened, like any gracioso, and - again in the best traditions of his trade - he expresses his fear in an extravagantly

comic manner:

COQUÍN ¡Plegue al cielo que no esté
muy alto aqueste balcón
por si me arroja por él! (I:708-10)

As we might expect from a joke written by Calderón, this is no piece of random foolery. The reference is, of course, to the scene in La Vida es Sueño in which Segismundo throws the servant out of the window because he has displeased him.(7) So here is the gracioso of a comedia bumping into the King of a comedia, frightened in case the King in this play acts like the King of another.

Luckily for Coquín, this is not La Vida es Sueño, but a different play altogether. Pedro may have a fierce theatrical reputation, but he is not displaying it at present. Coquín is not defenestrated, but questioned. The King tries to re-establish control of the situation, as a King should. So he asks the intruder for his identity. But this apparently perfectly simple and natural question gives Coquín a cue for more pointed banter, all of which mocks the idea of personal identity, and points a mocking finger at the extent to which the person we call "ourselves" is no more than a succession of roles.

REY ¿Quién sois?
COQUÍN ¿Yo, señor?
REY Vos. (I:710)

The King uses his most authoritative voice; Coquín jumps, assumes an air of elaborate innocence, and pretends the King must be talking to somebody else. On the otherwise empty stage, this gives us a cue for laughter. When he comes to answer the question, Coquín is afraid, he wriggles, he evades. He is frightened to tell the King he is a jester because Pedro's stern reputation has led him to believe the King has

no time for them, and his fearful and comic evasion of this simple question tells us much about Pedro and the kind of society he governs:

COQUÍN Yo,
¡válgame el cielo!, soy quien
vuestra Majestad quisiere,
sin quitar y sin poner,
porque un hombre muy discreto
me dio por consejo ayer,
no fuese quien en mi vida
vos no quisiéseis... (I:710-18)

The words are a wonderfully comic description of common attitudes to authority in general. That is so often the way the child behaves to the overbearing parent, the subordinate to the tyrannical boss; it deftly characterises our fear of presenting ourselves as we really are, and our absurd attempts to present ourselves only as authority is expected to want us to appear. As such, it suggests a highly developed form of tyranny.

To judge from their past behaviour on the stage, Gutierre and Mencía live under such a tyranny. They seek to be the honourable husband, the chaste wife, in their own and in each other's eyes, because if this image were to collapse, then their present identity would be called into question. "Soy quien soy" is, after all, a rather hollow boast; Mencía can only affirm it for as long as she can continue both to think herself chaste and be thought to be chaste. Once that image fails, who then does she become?

Coquín is faced with a similar dilemma; he gets his identity from being funny; he identifies the King as a cruel man who never laughs at all - and so he wishes to remove himself as quickly as he can:

COQUÍN quien vos quisiéredes sólo
fuí, quien gustaréis seré,
quien os place soy; y en esto
mirad con quien y sin quien...
y así, con vuestra licencia
por donde vine me iré
hoy, con mis pies de compás,
si no con compás de pies. (I:720-8)

This delightfully comic exaggeration of deference is a prelude to an elaborately furtive exit that takes as its theme the chorus of a popular song:

Con amor y sin dinero
Mirad con quien y sin quien
Para que me encuentre bien. (8)

Like the lover who sings it, Coquín feels he has no hope of success. He modifies its sense to suit his situation; he is with the King, who does not laugh; he is without an appreciative audience - and the King is shortly to be without him, too.(9) He tiptoes out with comically exaggerated caution - presumably funny walks were also a speciality of the gracioso - "con pies de compás". This could be a reference to his physical posture - toes pointed legs straight and extended apart - and it gives rise to a variety of double meanings.(10) "Gentil compás de pies" means to go very fast - presumably Coquín is moving slowly; it is also a technical term for a kind of oblique shuffling movement employed by fencers. Perhaps he trips up and falls over.

Whatever the joke was, it is a shame that we have lost it - if not through sheer incomprehension, then at least through heavy-handed pedantry. But even though we may have lost the joke, let us assume that the audience does not. They laugh: but the King keeps a straight face. Part of the scene's humour probably arises from the King's humourlessness. He persists, in a dogged kind of way, with his original question:

REY Aunque me habéis respondido
cuanto pudiera saber,
quién sois os he preguntado. (I:729-31)

In a way it is foolish to ask who a person is in a world of play-actors, for there can be no answer. Coquín gives him none. Instead he skilfully leads him astray into quite a different question:

COQUÍN ...teniendo un oficio yo
que vos no habeis menester.

REY ¿Que oficio tenéis?

What was before most feared about the King becomes an opportunity for some sly flattery; Pedro rises to the bait and asks Coquín, no longer who he is, but now what oficio he holds. In effect, he is asking him what role he plays; and now Coquín, as with Enrique before[11] is only too happy to oblige.

Enrique was easy to handle; with the King, Coquín seems to be taking more care. The apparently spontaneous prattle must be played in such a way as to suggest a fearful, and careful, piece of manipulation.

The truth is that Coquín's task is make people laugh; since that truth is awkward, even dangerous, it must be modified to suit the circumstances. Coquín rattles out several possibilities, alert for signs of a favourable or unfavourable response:

COQUÍN Yo soy
cierto correo de a pie
portador de todas nuevas,
hurón de todo interés,
sin que se me haya escapado
señor, profeso o novel;
y dél que me ha dado más,
digo mal, mas digo bien. (I:741-8)

Coquín is presenting himself as a kind of pícaro and spy.[12] He is a

ferret, a ferreter out of scandal, however deeply gone to earth.(13) Those who give him the most information are those he treats worst ("digo mal") in that he spreads the vilest stories about them - "mas digo bien", for the stories are true. Like Pasquín, everyone is his legitimate prey,(14) no-one escapes him, and he can gain admission everywhere:

COQUÍN
Todas las casas son mías;
y aunque lo son, esta vez
la de don Gutierre Alfonso
es mi accesoria, en quien fué
mi pasto meridiano,
un andaluz cordobés. (I:749-54)

In fact, he boasts, he is more important than the people who house him - in that he holds their secrets in his hands.

Pedro's reactions to this are quite important. One can only guess at the way in which he would be played here. Perhaps he would welcome the presence of such a ferret in his midst, particularly one associated with Gutierre, whose scandalous doings are, as Coquín hints, his bread and butter.(15) So Coquín becomes emboldened, and begins to hint more and more openly of his principal role:

COQUÍN
Soy cofrade del contento;
el pesar no sé quien es,
ni aun para servirle: en fin
soy, aquí donde me véis,
mayordomo de la risa,
gentilhombre del placer,
y camarero del gusto,
pues que me visto con el. (I:755-62)

All this is something of a lie, of course, since we have just seen him desperately scared and anxious, but no matter: the point is not to tell the truth, but please the King, If the lie is wittingly told, then so much the better. "Ni aun para servirle" is a mocking reference to the

formulae of polite greeting employed by distant acquaintances. Grief and Coquín are not on speaking terms, they have never so much as said hello to each other. At the same time, he plays on the literal meaning of "servir" and goes on to enumerate the (totally imaginary) masters he does serve. He is a kind of chameleon ("quien os place soy") - who just now wears the livery of the court of laughter. His position in court is quite a high one, "mayordomo de la risa", "camarero del gusto".(16) Preposterous titles reel off the tip of his tongue; he is daring enough to risk another joke, a more involved one:

COQUÍN
he temido
el darme aquí a conocer;
porque un rey que no se ríe
temo que me libre cien
esportillas batanadas
con pespuntes al envés
por vagamundo. (I:763-69)

He fears that his status may drop alarmingly - from mayordomo to pícaro, to a mere mozo de la esportilla(17) - eking a precarious living out of carrying heavy baskets. What is worse is that the pespuntes of his baskets become batanadas - the knots of a whip.(18) The baskets are turned "upside-down" ("al envés"), used as whips to beat him on the bottom ("al envés"). The joke is an involved one; the King may not laugh at it, but his reply shows that he has certainly understood it, for he caps it with a little joke of his own:

REY
¿En fin, sois
hombre que a cargo tenéis
la risa? (I:769-71)

The joke involves a simple play on two meanings of "cargo" - meaning load of a carrier, and job. Coquín sees the joke, takes heart, and responds with great enthusiasm. The King, he feels, has accepted him for who he is:

COQUÍN Sí, mi señor,
y porque lo echéis de ver,
esto es jugar de gracioso
en palacio. (CÚBRESE) (I:771-4)

Here at last is a man after his own heart; it seems Coquín has found a master to his taste. He puts on his hat and walks with a grandee's swagger:(19) "esto es jugar de gracioso". The inference is clear: to be a grandee is to play the fool. This is a joke with a sharp edge to it - and one that will be acted out in the rest of the scene.

Now both characters know where they stand, and know what parts they have to play. They stand like characters in an <u>auto</u>(20) who have just been given their roles, and who now intend to act them out on the stage of the world. They hold their badges of office, their theatrical props. The King has his sceptre, his serious face and his crown; the jester his motley, his funny face and his hat firmly on his head. The one plays the King; the other the <u>gracioso</u>. Now if the world is to make sense, the two roles must be in opposition. It would not do for the King to be a figure of fun, nor for the funny man ever to be the King. The King proposes that this opposition between the two roles be acted out and put to the test:

REY cada vez
que me hiciéredes reír
cien escudos os daré;
y si no me hubiereis hecho
reír en término de un mes
os han de sacar los dientes. (I:778-83)

This is a strange bargain. One critic has caught the feeling of the scene very well:

> "We want to see the King made to laugh, expose his teeth, whilst the clown, unsmiling, saves his." (21)

But its significance has remained controversial. Critics hostile to the King insist that Pedro is a man who is incapable of laughter. They argue that Calderón presents him as a man who cannot laugh in order to impress us with his cruelty.(22) Those favourable to the King insist the opposite. Since the King cannot laugh, they argue, he will be commended for his seriousness. A favourable contrast will be drawn between the King on stage, stern but just, not prepared to waste his time on frivolity, and the King in the flesh - the lax, the weak, the ineffectual and the pleasure-loving Philip IV.(23)

I suspect that such arguments under-estimate the subtlety of Calderón's stage presentation. He presents us with a King who can actually crack a joke; and the terms of his bargain, too, have a strong streak of macabre humour in them.(24) So the King is mirthless by reputation only. It is not that he cannot laugh, but that he chooses not to. His mirthlessness is an affectation, a mere pose.

Such a pose may strike us as strange - but to its original audience it would have seemed more familiar. For it is an almost exact replica of the gravedad affected by their own king in public. Generally, Spanish writers took it for granted, and did not comment on it - though we may see it portrayed in Velázquez' extraordinary portraits of the King.(25) It certainly made a great impression on foreign travellers. Antoine de Burnel gave a graphic description of the King's utter inexpressiveness:

> "Usa de tanta gravedad, que anda y se conduce con el aire de una estatua animada. Los que se le acercan aseguran que, cuando le han hablado, no le han visto jamás cambiar de asiento ni de postura: que los recibía, los escuchaba y los respondía con el mismo semblante, no habiendo en su cuerpo nada movible sino los labios y la lengua." (26)

This gravedad was, of course, an affectation; the King was an emotional man, and notorious for his addiction to frivolous pleasures. There was the rare occasion in which this mask-like immobility was seen to slip, reported in a letter by an anonymous Jesuit correspondent.(27) The King and Queen were visiting a monastery with their children. It was the first time the little princess María Teresa had been seen in public, and she looked utterly delightful:

> "venía al lado de su hermano en cuerpecito, con un baquero de lana encarnado, fondo en tela de oro cargado de franjas, muy linda, rubia y blanca, que parecía un niño Jesús. Sus padres, los Reyes, la iban diciendo "Anda, niña" y ella con tantas luces y adornos se paraba bobilla, y su madre se le iba la vida viéndola; y no me espanto de ello, que se llevó los aplausos de todos, echándole a gritos mil bendiciones, y sus padres gustaban de oírlas....."

After the service, the Father Superior asked if he could give the children a present. The King agreed.

> "Luego se llegó la niña, que para recibir todos entienden; diósele unos ricos relicarios, de que gustaban todos de ver, y la niña más alegre y viva que entró estaba bonita mirando. La madre la dijo: "Dilo algo al Padre", dijo "Dios os guarde". Con esto todos la echamos mil bendiciones y su padre por que no le hiciesen reír se tapó algo el rostro."

There is a certain sadness in this figure of a man so constrained by the demands of royal dignity as to be unable to share his joy at the sight of his daughter. It did not strike the correspondent as strange that the King should hide his face to conceal his laughter, and he made no comment on it. But he was surprised to see the King showing such signs of pleasure -

> "Estuvieron Rey y Reina apacibilísimos cual nunca les habemos visto."

Whatever liberties the King may have permitted himself in his private entertainments, it seems that whilst witnessing entertainment in public his mask was impenetrable. Another traveller, François Bertaut, gives a chilling description of the King's behaviour at a play:

> "Pendant toute la Comédie, hormis une parole qu'il a dite à la Reine, il n'a pas branlé ni des pieds, ni des mains, ni de la tête; tournant seulement les yeux quelques fois d'un côté à d'autre, et n'aiant personne auprès de lui qu'un Nain." (28)

With the example of such an icy immobility to contain them, and with the King's roving eye to observe them, the courtiers, too, must have remained rigid, frozen in dignified immobility. Laughter, above all, would have been forbidden in the interests of decorum.

It must have been a strange audience to play to. It is perfectly possible that this very scene was played in such circumstances; that Calderón had such a setting in mind when he wrote it.

With this in mind, it is worth considering the way in which Coquín's jokes would be delivered. Once he has struck his bargain with the King, he rattles off the first with sublime confidence:

COQUÍN Testigo falso me hacéis
y es ilícito contrato
de inorme lesión. (I:784-6)

- and then he waits for the laugh. But no laughter comes. The King pretends not to understand, he taunts Coquín with an affected ignorance:

REY ¿Por qué?

COQUÍN Porque quedaré lisiado
si le aceto. ¿No se ve? (I:786-8)

Coquín is obviously caught off his guard; having improved on his joke, he still gets no laughter, and gives vent to his exasperation. Why

doesn't the King get it? The rest of the scene consists of increasingly anxious and frantic attempts on Coquín's part to achieve successful comedy. Each joke will be followed by the same pause, the same hopeful wait for the laughter that is not forthcoming.

Coquín's failure is itself comic; Calderón has hit upon an ingenious way of doubling the humour of his gracioso's jokes.

Played before an audience at court, where the audience themselves were not allowed to laugh, the effect must have been devastating.

So the stage king, whose gravity is such a transparent pose, is a perfect mirror-image of the real king, who sits immobile, unresponsive, watching his own image in an actor. It is like being in a hall of mirrors - with reflections that frighten as well as amuse.

For the image the mirrors reveal is far from one of a well-ordered world. The grandee struts before the King: but the grandee is a buffoon, and the King a mere sham.

What we are seeing is a glimpse of El mundo por dentro,[29] of a world turned completely inside-out. Many of Coquín's jokes hint at this.

When Coquín was telling the King of his relationship with Gutierre, he described his master's house as his "accesoria" (I:752). Coquín's first joke had been to the effect that he lived in the stable (I:456-65), and the "accesoria" was usually a place where the horses were kept - an annex to the main building, a stable for the horse and for various inferior servants.[30] But here the position has been reversed - the stable has become the house, the house has turned into a stable.

This sense of inversion in the world is common to almost all the jokes Coquín makes from now till the end of the scene.[31] His first attempt at a gloss on his joking comment on the contract - which we shall consider in detail later - draws our attention to this state of

topsy-turvydom:

COQUÍN Dicen, cuando uno se ríe,
que enseña los dientes; pues
enseñarlos yo llorando
sera reírme en revés. (I:789-92)

If Coquín does not make the King show his teeth in laughter, then the King will have Coquín's teeth pulled out, so that he shows them in his tears.

Coquín hints that this will be cruel; and more than that, a reversal of the King's normal behaviour:

COQUÍN Dicen que sois tan severo
que a todos dientes hacéis;
¿qué os hice yo, que a mí sólo
deshacérmelos queréis? (I:793-6)

The King's continuing refusal to respond forces Coquín to elaborate an even more outrageous variation on the same theme:

COQUÍN por lo menos un mes
me hallo aquí como en la calle
de vida; y al cabo dél,
no es mucho que tome postas
en mi boca la vejez. (I:800-4)

He is playing with the phrase "como quien se lo halle en la calle", an idiom describing a chance find, something that one stumbles across unexpectedly.(32) Coquín was expecting punishment, or even death; instead he finds himself unexpectedly alive and unharmed for at least a month. He expected to be whipped as a vagabond, "un hombre de la calle". He is a man of the street; so his life is not the "camino" of traditional theology, but a city street, "la calle de vida". At the end of the street comes the open country; those who wish to travel fast in it take "postas", post-horses, to avoid the delay caused by the need

to stop and rest their own. Coquín is travelling along the street of life, travelling in time towards old age and death. Old men have no teeth; if Coquín ends up at the end of the month without teeth, then it will be as if he had become prematurely old. But it will not be Coquín travelling in time towards old age: old age gallops on post horses towards him.

Not even this gets any response. Coquín tries again:

COQUÍN y así voy a examinarme
de cosquilla. (I:805-6)

In a normal world, examination tests learning - and those who succeed are rewarded. In this mad world, however, it is not learning that counts but the tickle-stick of the professional comedian, the ability to make a man laugh. But he refuses; and Coquín stamps his foot in vexation -

COQUÍN Voto a diez,
¡que os habéis de reír! (I:806-7)

It is a final act of comic defiance. Before he makes his exit, however, we need to take a closer look at the terms of the bargain. Coquín describes it as illegal:

COQUÍN Testigo falso me hacéis
y es ilícito contrato
de inorme lesión. (I:784-6)

He is playing on a double meaning of lesión - meaning both a physical hurt and a legal tort. If he loses, he will be the injured party - in more ways than one.

A contract was supposed to be a freely chosen and mutually binding agreement entered into by two or more people; an illicit contract was one which broke the law or offended against generally accepted custom.

Such a contract was null and void; and this was the kind of contract that was called of "lesión". Martín Navarro de Azpilcueta, a legal authority, makes it clear just what kinds of contracts of exchange might be termed illicit in this sense:

> "Este cambio...hácese ilícito, si el cambiador lleva más de lo que por justa ley o costumbre se le deve" (33)

A lesión becomes enorme if the discrepancy between what is being offered and the value of the article concerned is more than half its worth. Coquín complains he is being cheated - his teeth are worth very much more. And laughter is beyond price.

So the contract is illegal - particularly when Coquín is not entering into it voluntarily, but out of fear of meeting a very much worse fate.(34) On the one hand, Coquín is "just" making a joke. On the other, he has a serious point to make. One cannot put a price on human suffering; if the King tries, the contract he proposes is null and void.

But the ultimate source of all that is legal is the King. So the one person who is meant to be embodying the law is in fact breaking it, and therefore contributing to its destruction. What happens then? Does the King arrest himself?

Now that awkward dilemma can be avoided, perhaps, if we argue that the agreement the King proposes is no legal monstrosity, but a perfectly valid one. Perhaps he genuinely sees jesting as a profession harmful both to the state and to the moral health of the jester.(35) Perhaps he seeks reform; perhaps he wants to teach this jester a lesson. Perhaps he sees jesting as a profession empty of value; perhaps he intends this bargain to stand as a kind of emblem of this absurdity. So in that case, too, the bargain is a burla. Neither laughter, teeth

or suffering can possibly be valued at 100 escudos.

The King makes the laws - that is his role. The jester makes the jokes; that is his. But if the King makes laws that are burlas, and not veras, then he is a clown too, no matter how straight a face he may keep.

If the King is a clown, what of the state he governs? Serious and disquieting issues are at stake here - yet they arise out of a simple pun. Leonor is still behind the curtain; like us, she is awaiting an act of justice. But justice seems very far away. This appears to be a world in which the joke lays down the law; and the law is a joke. The world is upside-down.(36)

NOTES

(1) Of course this really depends on the audience's familiarity with the source-play. This contains the germ of this scene, although it is not fully developed or integrated into the rest of the play. See A.E. Sloman, The Dramatic Craftsmanship of Calderón (Oxford, 1958), p. 46; (?) Lope de Vega, El médico de su honra, ed. cit., pp. 126-8.

(2) Summaries of the characteristics of the traditional gracioso can be found in J.H. Arjona, 'La introducción del gracioso en el teatro de Lope de Vega', HR 7 (1939), pp. 1-21; E.B. Place, 'Does Lope de Vega's gracioso Stem in part from Harlequin?', Hispania 17 (1934), pp. 51-8, 257-70; Miguel Herrero, 'Génesis de la figura del donaire', RFE 26 (1941), pp. 46-78. A less helpful general study is C.D. Ley's El gracioso en el teatro de la Peninsula (Madrid, 1954). N.D. Shergold, in his A History of the Spanish Stage (Oxford, 1967), notes that from the very beginning of their appearance on stage graciosos displayed a comic preoccupation with food (p. 91, n. 2; cf. El médico, I:753) and a propensity to cowardice (p. 92).

(3) J.E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth (London, 1934), pp. 277-8.

(4) See Ann Righter, Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play (London, 1962), especially pp. 113ss. For an utterly fascinating account of how the image may have helped shape the design of English public theatres, see Frances Yates, Theatre of the World (London, 1969).

(5) The image is most beautifully expressed in Cervantes, Don Quijote, II chapter 12; ed. Riquer, p. 617. Note Sancho's response to it: "Brava comparación, aunque no tan nueva, que yo no la haya oído muchas y diversas veces...". Calderón's most celebrated use of it occurs in his autos, particularly El gran teatro del mundo and No hay más fortuna que Dios.

(6) Andres Sánchez de Espejo, Relacion...aiustada en lo posible a la verdad.... Both author and title have names that seem curiously appropriate to the context. The account is quoted in J.E. Varey's invaluable study of palace theatrical performance, 'L'auditoire du Salon Dorado de l'Alcázar de Madrid au XVIIème siècle', in Dramaturgie et société, II p. 80.

(7) La vida es sueño, ed. cit., 1430. Theatrical references abound in Calderón's work. In the second act, Coquín compares Pedro to another King out of a play: the King of Sicily in Angel, Rey de Sicilia y demonio en la mujer (II:438; see C.A. Jones' edition, p. 56, n. 3). The play could also be Rodrigo de Herrera's Del cielo viene el buen Rey, in BAE XLV, pp. 237-51.

As for the defenestration of awkward or impertinent servants, it could have been something of a theatrical cliché; it can be found in Tirso de Molina, El celoso prudente, ed. Blanca de los Rios in Obras dramáticas completas, vol. I (Madrid, 1946), pp. 1139a and 1141a, and in Alarcón, El examen de maridos, II:1865, ed. A. Millares Carlo (Clásicos Castellanos). This could even be a historical reference to King Pedro's murder of the Infante don Juan of Aragon. Pedro is supposed to have thrown the dead body of the Infante out of the window, down onto the crowd below, saying "Veis ahí a vuestro señor y al que demandaba el estado de Vizcaya". It is one of Pedro's most spectacular acts of cruelty, recounted with gloomy relish by Mariana in his Historia, ed. cit., p. 497d.

(8) This highly popular song frequently gets quoted in plays of the period. See E. M. Wilson and Jack Sage, Poesías líricas en las obras dramáticas de Calderón (London, 1964), no. 103.

(9) Cf. C. A. Jones' edition, p. 28, n. 2.

(10) Some of these meanings are explained by C. A. Jones, p. 28, n. 3. For the connection between compasses and fencing masters, cf. Quevedo, El buscón, ed. cit., pp. 96-104. At the time, compasses were still unfamiliar, exotic instruments, associated with a degree of crankiness - at least to judge from the humour of Quevedo. El Compás was also the name of a famous brothel in Sevilla (see Deleito y Piñuela, La mala vida en la España de Felipe IV (Madrid, 1959), pp. 50ss); this may be a reference to it - perhaps people were in a hurry to get there - or perhaps to leave.

(11) Cf. I:456-478.

(12) The gracioso's role is being extended in the direction of the picaresque, as Valbuena Briones notes in the footnote to I:769 in his edition. The correo referred to here is probably the kind of correo Quevedo exposes in El buscón, chap. 14 (ed. cit., p. 159). It was a well-known theives' trick to make up bundles of false letters, use them to gain admission into other people's houses, trick them into paying the postage and rob whatever they could find. Coquín may be referring to this at I:749: "Todas las casas son mías".

(13) 'Hurón' means literally a ferret, figuratively to refer to one curious to unearth gossip or scandal; see Autoridades, s.v.

(14) Cf. PASQUÍN Quiero ir a caza
de figuras: ojo alerta
señores, que soy la Parca. (Obras Completas, I, p. 155b)

(15) COQUÍN fue
mi pasto meridiano,
un andaluz cordobés (I:752-4)

The meaning is not altogether clear. Córdoba was famous for its horses; so Coquín may be referring to the fact that he stole the horse's food; or, alternately, "un andaluz cordobés" refers to Gutierre himself.

(16) The officials Coquín mentions here were all important figures in the court. The jester seems not to have been so menial a figure as one might be inclined to imagine; Philip IV seems to have encouraged his buffoons to expose and related scandals about influential nobles. See Ruth L. Kennedy, 'La prudencia en la mujer and the Ambient that Brought it Forth', PMLA 63 (1948), pp. 1148-9. An account of 1611 states that it was customary for nobles to give lavish entertainments to the higher class of prostitutes, and that it was considered prudent to exclude buffoons from such functions "porque son trompetas y ojos de todo lo que oyen y ven ". See Carl Justi, Velázquez y su siglo, translated by Pedro Morrales (Madrid, 1953), p. 701.

(17) These were people who earned their living hiring their services as carriers of goods from the markets. It was another notoriously criminal profession; it involved a low initial outlay, and had the advantage of offering the thief easy access to the interior of people's houses. See Deleito y Piñuela, ~~op. cit.~~, p. 143; Fouger de Haan, "Pícaros y ganapanes" in Homenaje a Menéndez y Pelayo, vol. II (Madrid, 1899). This was one of the professions picked up by Rinconete and Cortadillo, see Cervantes, Novelas Ejemplares, ed. Rodríguez Marín (Clásicos Castellanos), II, p. 147.

(18) Pespuntes are the interweaved patterns on the bottom of wicker baskets, and are also associated with the knots of a whip. In Tirso's El vergonzoso en palacio the gracioso Tarso makes a similar joke:

TARSO El Duque mandado había
que, por las acostumbradas,
nos diesen las pespuntadas
orden de caballería. (II:315-8)

Américo Castro explains the passage in the note to his edition: "Refiérese este pasaje a la pena de azotes aplicada con las pespuntadas, o sea dos tiros de cuero cosidas a pespunte" in Tirso de Molina, Comedias, I (Clásicos Castellanos), p. 60. Whipping was the customary punishment of the vagabond; cf. Calderón, De una causa, dos efectos in Obras Completas, II, 426b. At least in England, it was the customary punishment for the unsuccessful jester; cf. Shakespeare, King Lear, Act I, sc. iv:105.

(19) Of course, only grandees had the privilege of wearing hats in the King's presence. In Sánchez de Espejo's Relación (quoted above, see note 6), he mentions the presence of the high officials Coquín has just claimed to be (I:759-61): "con mayordomos mayores en pie, y por grandes (que siempre lo son) cubiertos".

(20) See El gran teatro del mundo, 489 ff; No hay más fortuna que Dios, 282ff.

(21) L. Abel, 'Art While Being Ruled', Commentary 29 (1960), p. 411.

(22) Cf. A. A. Parker, The Approach to the Spanish Drama of the Golden Age (London, 1957); Sloman, op. cit., p. 42.

(23) Cf. A. I. Watson, art. cit., pp. 332ss.

(24) There is a curious passage at the end of Merlin Coccai (Teofilo Folengo) Baldus in which the heroes of this macaronic mock epic enter an enormous pumpkin, filled with barbers incessantly tearing the teeth out of buffoons and liars of every kind. The author sadly concludes:

> "Zucca mihi patria est: opus est hic perdere
> tot quot in immenso posui mendacia libro"

See Teofilo Folengo, Opere, ed. Carlo Cordié (Naples, 1977), bk. XXV, ll. 649-50. It is doubtful that this passage of El médico de su honra is a reference to Folengo's work; perhaps both passages share a common source. In Calderón's De una causa dos efectos, the gracioso Fadrique makes his first entrance spitting blood (Obras Completas, I, p. 461b); the Prince's son Fadrique promised to pay him if he let himself have one of his teeth pulled out for the young Prince's amusement. Watson mentions cases in which this is actually supposed to have happened (art. cit., p. 335 and n. 29).

(25) Diego Saavedra Fajardo describes how the majestic and august expression of gravedad on the King's face, as depicted by Velázquez, filled him with such reverence that he fell on one knee before the portrait. See his República literaria, ed. Vicente García de Diego (Madrid, 1942), pp. 18-21; quoted by José López-Rey, Velázquez, trans. Nicoletta Sinborowski (London, 1978), pp. 64-5. The incident, albeit fictional, conveys very tellingly the respect aroused by the figure of the King. We have lost much of that respect for royalty, and that may well lead us to under-estimate the impact this scene must have had when first played on the stage.

(26) Voyage en Espagne (Cologne 1666), chap. VI; quoted by Deleito y Piñuela in El Rey se divierte (Madrid, 1955), p. 16.

(27) The letter is dated 16th February, 1643; quoted in Ortega y Gasset, De la España alucinada y alucinante de Velázquez, in Obras Completas, vol. VIII (Madrid, 1962), p. 522.

(28) The passage comes from a letter Bertaut wrote to his sister in October 1659; quoted in J. E. Varey, art. cit., p. 90.

(29) Cf. Quevedo, Sueños, ed. J. Cejador y Frauca (Clásicos Castellanos), II, pp. 7-57.

(30) Autoridades describes such a dwelling with a certain contempt: "la casa pequeña contigua...a otra principal, la qual de ordinario sirve para la habitación de criados inferiores, o para tener ganadas", s.v. "accessòria".

(31) Cf. the earlier word play on the various senses of "al envés" (I:768).

(32) Cf. Autoridades, s.v. "calle".

(33) Quoted in Autoridades, s.v. "ilícito".

(34) I:797-9 hint that there is at least an element of compulsion in Coquín's acceptance of the bargain:

COQUÍN Pero vengo en el partido
que porque ahora me dejéis
ir libre, no le rehuso.

(35) This argument is eloquently put by Watson. The idea that there are moments when jesting is definitely not in order is most movingly expressed by Cervantes in Don Quijote's dying words: "Déjense burlas aparte, y tráigame un confesor que me confiese;... que en tales trances no se ha de burlar el hombre con el alma" (Part II, chap. 74; ed. Riquer, p. 1064).

(36) Cf.: "The society in which the innocent Mencía is brutally murdered is topsy-turvy, a society in which love is smothered by honour and moral values are confused. And in this society laughter is transformed into tears.", Sloman, op. cit., p. 47. He catches a particular feeling of the play very well, and his words have a clear application to this scene.

C H A P T E R T W E L V E

"¡Vive Dios, que me engañaba!..."

Coquín's abrupt exit leaves the stage clear for the scene we had originally been expecting - the solemn judicial confrontation between Gutierre and the King. But our perspective has been changed by the scene we have just witnessed. The law has been turned into a joke; and so we may well wonder exactly what kind of justice the King may now execute.

But first certain formalities have to be undergone. For Enrique comes on with Gutierre, and the two brothers exchange the most perfunctory of greetings:

ENRIQUE Déme Vuestra Majestad
la mano.

REY Vengáis con bien,
Enrique. ¿Cómo os sentís?

ENRIQUE Más, señor, el susto fué
que el golpe; estoy bueno. (I:809-13)

Enrique's manner is so perfunctory as to be almost rude; and this brusque exchange between the two rivals serves to remind us that the apparently trivial act of betrayal that occupies our attention is set against a much greater social disruption.

Enrique's silent presence on stage also serves another purpose. In a way, he is above the law; the damage he has inflicted on Mencía, and seems determined to continue to inflict, is as great as any that Gutierre has given Leonor. Gutierre is on trial for his offence; Enrique, it seems, is to go unpunished.

His presence also adds to the pressures on Gutierre. Calderón has taken care to present him as a man much preoccupied with matters of prestige and worldly success.(1) Gutierre hoped to find favour both with the King and with Enrique; yet now he is to be humiliated by the one in the presence of the other.

But first, and with an innocence that seems ironic in the context, Gutierre holds up to the King a most flattering image:

GUTIERRE el suelo que pisáis
es soberano dosel,
que ilumina de los vientos
uno y otro rosicler;
y vengáis con la salud
que este reino ha menester,
para que os adore España,
coronado de laurel. (I:817-24)

The very ground Pedro treads with his feet is described as an elevated throne of dazzling light that illumines the farthest corners of the earth. Pedro is the sun of justice and the sun of honour, Apollo the sun, Apollo the physician. He will heal his country's wounds and his people will worship him. He will be crowned with laurel, Apollo's sacred tree, tree of healing, the wreath of victors. Lawful obedience is expressed as a kind of blasphemous idolatry.(2)

It is also significant that this is all expressed as a pious wish. The implication is that Spain needs healing, and Spain needs a victory. Such a need would have certainly been felt by Calderón's original audience.

Those familiar with Mariana's account of Pedro's reign would also recognise the inappropriateness of Gutierre's flattery. For Mariana, Pedro was everything but an Apollo. He brought no cure for his country's ills, but simply added to them. His savagery and injustice plunged the country into terrible civil wars; his reign was a period of unrelieved darkness.

In the light of Mariana's account, all Gutierre's images would be far more fittingly applied to Enrique, for it was he who healed the wounds of the civil wars, and his reign was a kind of dawn after the black night of Pedro's.(3)

But here the irony reaches a new level; for the Enrique of this play has shown himself to be no healer, but a source of sickness. His rejection of care for his physical hurts paralleled his rejection of any kind of cure for his emotional and spiritual sickness.(4)

But Enrique's behaviour in no way exonerates the King's. At this moment, he is playing his part almost exactly as Mariana would have written it. He is polite to a man who is rude to him, and excessively rude to one who is polite to him. When confronted with rudeness, the King responds with politeness; when with politeness, he is rude in return. His behaviour appears irrational, and his public display of anger greatly unjust.

It was never easy to understand why he chose to hide Leonor; it could easily have been interpreted as the action of a guilty man trying to hide the evidence - rather than of a supposedly upright King apparently trying to carry out justice. He has justified it in the following terms:

REY Mas Gutierre viene allí;
podrá, si conmigo os ve,
conocer que me informásteis
primero. (I:695-8)

He claimed not to want Gutierre to know that Leonor had complained to him first; yet now he makes no attempt to disguise the fact that someone has complained to him about Gutierre's behaviour:

REY De vos, don Gutierre Alfonso...

GUTIERRE ¿Las espaldas me volvéis?

REY Grandes querellas me dan. (I:825-7)

His indefinite plural verb is at best the most transparent of fictions. Once Gutierre knows the nature of the complaint, it is hardly

difficult for him to guess its source.

But not only does the King try to conceal the source of the charge against him; his public display of displeasure indicates that he is convinced of Gutierre's guilt before he has even been informed of the charge and been given an opportunity to defend himself against it. He is behaving in a way that directly contradicts the apparently reasonable statement of intent he had earlier given Leonor, in which he had stressed the importance of hearing both sides of the question.(5) His behaviour here suggests that as far as he is concerned the judicial process consists of the public humiliation of the defendant followed by his bullying into a confession of guilt.

Gutierre resists this procedure with a certain quiet dignity that at least initially engages our sympathies. He comes across as a man aware of the seriousness of having incurred the anger of the King, yet unbowed and certainly not cowardly in the face of the King's terrible displeasure.(6)

First he puts up a sturdy defence of Leonor:

REY ¿Quién es, decidme, Leonor
una principal mujer
de Sevilla?

GUTIERRE Una señora
bella, ilustre y noble es
de lo mejor desta tierra. (I:829-33)

- and then, in response to the King's further probing, appears to be upholding the best values of gentlemanly conduct:

GUTIERRE No os he de mentir en nada,
que el hombre, señor, de bien,
no sabe mentir jamás,
y más delante del Rey. (I:837-40)

It is easy to see the appeal of such an old-fashioned, and sturdy statement of traditional noble values;[7] though the fact that such a statement even needs to be made suggests that the old values are not so firmly observed as Gutierre might want us to believe. When Gutierre begins to apply such values to his own behaviour, then they begin to appear definitely problematic:

GUTIERRE
Servíla, y mi intento entonces
casarme con ella fué,
si no mudara las cosas
de los tiempos el vaivén. (I:841-4)

Gutierre affirmed his intention of telling the truth - and certainly, on the strength of that statement, it would be hard to conclude him a liar. Yet it is hardly an outstanding example of frankness. His words are remarkable in their vagueness not so much for what they tell as for what they omit. Having conceded his original intentions of marriage, Gutierre imparts no information whatever as to what made him relinquish them. He does not even give any clue as to which of the parties concerned was responsible for the change, and ascribes it merely to impersonal events. His amplification of this distinctly non-informative statement is equally evasive:

GUTIERRE
Visitéla, entré en su casa
públicamente; si bien
no le debo a su opinión
de una mano el interés. (I:845-8)

Gutierre is drawing a careful distinction here; he admits that he has publicly courted Leonor, yet denies that he has ever acted in such a way as to make him obliged to marry her. This directly contradicts Leonor's evidence. He, for his part, asserts there to be a dividing line between actions that entail an inescapable commitment to marriage,

and those which do not. Precisely where this dividing line is to be drawn is a matter of dispute in the minds of commentators(8) - just as it may be for the audience - but not for Gutierre, who is convinced that his actions fall into the latter category. He claims that if her reputation had had to pay for his public visits, in other words if it had been damaged, then he would have paid the interest on the cost. Payment for this interest would take the form of his hand in marriage - and then the debt would have been closed. According to him, the interest that accrues from his debt to Leonor does not amount to marriage. According to her, it does. There is much in his words that is repugnant; he treats moral duties and emotional ties as if they were coins.

To a man such as Gutierre, there seems no possibility of a dimension in which moral obligations can not be so easily weighed and counted. He has done his sums: they do not add up to marriage. As far as he is concerned, that is the end of the matter; he is able to continue, with an almost shocking casualness:

GUTIERRE
Viéndome desobligado,
pudo mudarme después;
y así, libre deste amor,
en Sevilla me casé
con doña Mencía de Acuña,
dama principal, con quien
vivo fuera de Sevilla,
una casa de placer. (I:848-55)

He treats even his own emotions in the same mathematical fashion; having calculated the extent of his obligations, he changed his feelings to suit his sums. Love for Leonor was exchanged for love for Mencía - themselves no more than counters on his emotional abacus, designated by only the coldest and hollowest terms of social stratification: "dama principal", "señora ilustre".

There is a certain evasiveness, too, in Gutierre's apparently casual remark that having married in Sevilla, he now lives outside it. Now of course it may be that he has chosen to live out of town for the most natural and innocent of reasons, and the kind of suggestion put in the minds of the audience will depend greatly on the manner of his delivery. For it could suggest that there has been unpleasantness at the wedding; perhaps Gutierre is ashamed, or afraid to show his face in the city streets; perhaps he wishes to protect his wife from the scandal - out of sensitive concern for her feelings, maybe, or because there are things he wishes to conceal from her. There is no way of telling; Gutierre's casual remarks, like Mencía's half-joking jealousy (I:514-5), could suggest many levels of dissension and guilt.

Gutierre cuts short any speculation by moving on to describe what he feels to have been a public vindication of his innocence. Like Leonor, he mentions her unsuccessful lawsuit - but he draws a very different interpretation of events:

GUTIERRE
Leonor, mal aconsejada
(que no le aconseja bien
quien destruye su opinión),
pleitos intentó poner
a mi desposorio, donde
el más riguroso juez
no halló causa contra mí. (I:857-63)

It is with a certain slyness that Gutierre transfers the responsibility for Leonor's loss of reputation from off his own shoulders and on to Leonor's. He implies that her reputation would not have suffered at all if only she had accepted things as they stood. In this way he reinforces his earlier argument that he stood in no way obliged to marry Leonor. He argues that his marriage to Mencía was perfectly valid, and that its validity was corroborated by a judge - one of the

strictest of judges - in a court of law. But Leonor had accounted for her loss on the grounds that Gutierre had been able to wield more influence than she could (I:666); Gutierre mentions her claim and seeks to dismiss it:

GUTIERRE ella dice que fué
diligencia del favor.
¡Mirad vos a qué mujer
hermosa favor faltara
si le hubiera menester! (I:864-68)

He makes no attempt to refute her charge, or to deny it. Instead he counters it with a charge of his own. To assert that a woman can always use her beauty to wield influence with a judge is something of a cliché, and so likely to win unthinking assent. Yet surely this particular court case proves it to be untrue - for the simple reason that Leonor lost the case.

Yet perhaps these words are spoken with double intent. Gutierre is pretending to talk about the judge in the law suit whilst he is really talking about the King. He talks obliquely, presumably for fear of giving offence; yet the veil that covers his words is a thin one. He wants the King to know what he is driving at, whilst for the sake of decorum the King must be able in public to appear not to know. For the silly judge that has been gulled by the tears of a beautiful woman is no other than the King himself. As the next lines show, Gutierre has guessed that she has been to see him, and warns him against believing her lies.

This warning is the prelude to an emotional appeal of a very different kind. Gutierre urges the King to ignore the guileful tears of a woman and place his trust again in the straightforward honesty of a subject and a gentleman:

GUTIERRE Con este engaño pretende
puesto que vos lo sabéis,
valerse de vos; y así,
yo me pongo a vuestros pies,
donde a la justicia vuestra
dará la espada mi fe,
y mi lealtad la cabeza. (I:869-75)

Clearly, Gutierre kneels. He has sworn on his sword hilt, and placed his head on the block; physical gesture and emotional appeal alike are designed to sway the King in Gutierre's favour. What he must hope for is a scene of forgiveness and reconciliation.

But Calderón withholds such a scene. Instead of the more usual single exposition of the facts of a case, he has presented us with two, whose versions clash. As we listen, like the King, we have to judge between the two. Calderón does not make it easy for us; he keeps us in suspense for quite a while yet.

Instead of having the King accept Gutierre's version of events - which might have given us a lead - Gutierre is kept on his knees and interrogated further. The King has noticed the omissions in Gutierre's account and is determined to probe them. He does so with an astuteness that may cause us to revise our opinion of him.

The King's initial response to Leonor's request had been one of some uncertainty; he had given the impression of not being at all sure quite what was the right thing to do.(9) There were many reasons for his uncertainty; among them was the unpromising nature of Leonor's legal position.

The only way she could legally have prevented Gutierre's marriage to Mencía would have been for her to prove that Gutierre had actually married her, and that their marriage, although never celebrated ecclesiastically and publicly, was of the kind known as "por palabras de presente" or "de jure". As far as the Nueva Recopilación was

concerned, such marriages were legally binding, and any man who married again when the first wife was still alive was guilty of bigamy and therefore liable to receive the penalties laid down for that crime.(10) This means that the charge Leonor would be bringing against Gutierre was one of bigamy, on the grounds that their marriage was "de jure" and therefore perfectly valid. A. A. Parker defines such marriages in the following terms:

> "Estos matrimonios consistían solamente en la promesa libre y solemne que hacían un hombre y una mujer de unirse, y en la firmeza dada a este voto por la consumación carnal. La validez de semejantes matrimonios estribaba en el hecho de que la esencia del matrimonio es la voluntad de contraerlo y no hay más materia sacramental que el contrato: el sacramento se lo confieren a sí los contrayentes." (11)

If Leonor has been telling the truth, then her marriage with Gutierre fits these criteria. There was a solemn promise, consummated with intercourse. Her problem is to try to prove it. Obviously she would have had to overcome many difficulties in the process. Gutierre could defend himself by denying the existence of either the promise, or the intercourse that followed it. Neither line of defence can be satisfactorily proved or disproved - and subsequent events have, in any case, rendered the question of who was in the right an utterly academic one. The court decided in Gutierre's favour; Gutierre then married.(12)

So nothing the King can do can undo what has happened.(13) On the other hand, Leonor may genuinely be deserving sympathy and help; and Gutierre's behaviour has not been of the kind to arouse approval or admiration.

Certainly he is being disingenuous in the extreme in admitting that he publicly courted Leonor whilst denying any responsibility for

her subsequent loss of reputation. He may well, as he claims, have acted with a scrupulous regard for the letter of the law; but what to him seems to be legally right appears to us to be humanly wrong. So Gutierre's scrupulous legal behaviour leads us back to the very same problems confronting us when we tried to assess the nature of the King's justice.(14)

In this particular case, it seems that the only line of enquiry the King can profitably pursue is to try to discover why Gutierre left Leonor. Not only did it seem the weakest link in the story, but it should also clear up the difficulties of the case. For if Gutierre is shown to have been justified in leaving her, then she has only herself to blame for what happened. On the other hand, if he left her without good cause, then that disclosure in itself might aid in clearing her reputation - and it would also make it possible for the King to order Gutierre to compensate her according to her demands (I:671-2).

So Calderón has introduced some good legal reasons why the King should press on with this particular line of questioning. I suspect, too, that Gutierre has alienated the sympathy of his audience, and so it makes good dramatic sense that his self-righteous pose should be challenged. Hence the King's question:

REY ¿Qué causa tuvistéis, pues,
para tan grande mudanza? (I:876-7)

The question strikes home. Gutierre shows a distinct unwillingness to answer it. His first excuse is a feeble attempt to minimise the importance of the change:

GUTIERRE ¿Novedad tan grande es
mudarse un hombre? ¿No es cosa
que cada día se ve?

REY — Sí; pero de extremo a extremo
pasar el que quiso bien,
no fué sin grande ocasión. (I:878-83)

Gutierre stammers that for men to change their feelings is not that uncommon an occurrence; the women in the cazuela, possibly still smarting from all the accusations of fickleness hurled at Mencía, may well be provoked by such a feeble excuse, and be right behind the King in his refusal to be deflected from his original question. Gutierre's second excuse is more plausible, at least in the sense that it appeals to a generally accepted sense of decency:

GUTIERRE — Suplícoos que no me apretéis;
que soy hombre que, en ausencia
de las mujeres, daré
la vida por no decir
cosa indigna de su ser. (I:884-8)

Of course, women are by no means absent. They form a probably hostile audience; and the woman to whom Gutierre is referring is in fact very much present, even though unseen by Gutierre. This irony may well help the male members of the audience detach themselves a little from what he is saying and consider it more critically.

For in refusing to speak on the grounds that to do so would involve him in speaking ill of Leonor, Gutierre murders her reputation by implication. For he strongly infers that her behaviour was discreditable. Pedro takes him up on this:

REY — ¿Luego vos causa tuvistéis?

GUTIERRE — Sí, señor; pero creed
que si para mi descargo
hoy hubiera menester
decirlo, cuando importara
vida y alma, amante fiel
de su honor, no lo dijera. (I:889-95)

These are very strong words. Gutierre is saying that no matter what is at stake - whether it be his life or his soul - he will not disclose why he left Leonor. This, he claims, is a measure of the importance he attaches to her honour and her reputation. The obvious rejoinder is that if he really cared about her honour to that degree he would never have endangered it with his frequent visits, nor would he ever have left her. Leaving that aside, it is obvious that Gutierre's refusal to disclose the reasons why he left her does in fact damage her honour by implication. So that while he poses as "amante fiel" of her honour, he is in fact the opposite. The implication is damaging in itself, and doubly so in the context of Gutierre's sensational language. That first "sí" may be dragged out of him unwillingly, but for all his noble protestations Gutierre's refusal to disclose the reason for his leaving Leonor does not serve to protect her reputation. Whether deliberately or no, in refusing to talk Gutierre is doing the very thing he says he would rather die than do - he is attacking Leonor's reputation, and using the power of innuendo to do so.

Strict adherence to a code of gentlemanly conduct has led him to behave in ways that are far from chivalresque. Perhaps this causes him distress; perhaps it gives him satisfaction - here again, much will depend on the acting. But one may legitimately begin to suspect that he is motivated not so much by concern for Leonor's reputation as by anxiety over his own. Perhaps he fears that his leaving Leonor reflects discreditably not on her, but on him.

The actor, then, has a chance either to portray Gutierre as a conscious hypocrite, or else - more appropriately, I think - as a genuine man trying to act correctly according to his lights. He is led into confusion, and worse, by the narrowness of his beliefs in the

equivocal circumstances in which he attempts to apply them. This theme is more crucially developed as the play proceeds.

The King's response to Gutierre's equivocation is to become angry. The story goes[15] that Pedro was much feared for his ungovernable rage, and that it was in such fits of fury that he committed his cruellest crimes. Obviously, Calderón has a chance here to portray him as cruel - there is plenty of potential for a strong dramatic scene. But the scene he writes is characteristically subtler. It is as if he is aware of the audience's expectations and prejudices; but instead of playing to them, he plays with them. We expect a rage from the King, and we get it, or rather almost get it -

REY Pues yo lo quiero saber.

GUTIERRE Señor...

REY Es curiosidad.

GUTIERRE Mirad...

REY No me repliquéis;
que me enojaré, por vida...

GUTIERRE Señor, señor, no juréis... (I:896-900)

- since the King's mounting anger is deflected by Gutierre's sudden deference. The King's response to Gutierre will initially come across as emotional, impulsive and unthinking. We may then react to Pedro according to his "cruel" stereotype - and anticipate bad trouble; or else we may even justify his anger as being a perfectly proper response to Gutierre's prevarication. Whatever our response, it will be knocked from under our feet by the King's unexpected aside:

REY (AP.) Que dijese le apuré
el suceso en alta voz,
porque pueda responder
Leonor, si aquéste me engaña;
y si habla verdad, porque,
convencida con su culpa,
sepa Leonor que lo sé. (I:904-10)

It is as if the King Pedro of one story is whisked away before our very eyes, and the King Pedro of another is put in his place. The King's anger has been feigned; we have not been witnessing an instance of his "crueldad", of his harshness and his rigour; we have been watching him at work as "justiciero" instead.

Or at least, so it seems. His actions suddenly appear to belong to the tradition of the wise, if enigmatic, law-giver. Such a tradition is exemplified in the biblical story of King Solomon. It is told that two women came to see him, each claiming to be the mother of the same child. Neither brought witnesses nor circumstantial proof; it was the word of one against the word of the other. King Solomon had a sword brought and ordered his guards to cut in half the living child. The woman who was not the mother found the sentence just; the woman who was asked the King to give the child to the other woman, rather than have it killed. By her maternal love, the King's test had shown her to be the true mother, and

> "when Israel heard the judgement which the King had given, they all stood in awe of him; for they saw that he had the wisdom of God within him to administer justice". (16)

King Solomon gave a judgement that at first seemed enigmatic, even unjust - and in a sense it is the enigma that gives the story its point. Judges are presented with puzzles; it seems natural that their judgements should also puzzle. What is really satisfying about the

stories is that the enigma of the judgement, once solved, resolves the enigma of the case to be judged. Our initial bewilderment at the judge's behaviour serves to increase our admiration for his cleverness once the reasons underlying it have been understood.(17)

This is clearly the kind of King Pedro wishes to become. We have already noticed much in his behaviour that has seemed to be puzzling and apparently inexplicable. For instance, it was hard to account for his display of hostility towards Gutierre and his apparent assumption of his guilt. This certainly seemed to be contradicting his earlier statements to the effect that a judge should remain unbiased and hear both sides of any question put to him for judgement. The discrepancy between Pedro's actions and his declared intention easily led to doubts about Pedro's competence. Now we discover that Pedro has been one trick ahead of us all the time, that Leonor, as well as Gutierre, is on trial, and that appearances to the contrary are misleading.

In a way, the King is stage-managing the scene. Gutierre is about to tell his story, at the King's prompting; Leonor will overhear it, and so by a ruse the King hopes he will be able to discover which of the two stories is the true one. Then all will admire him for his ingenuity.

After all this prevarication, the story Gutierre eventually tells comes as something of an anti-climax:(18)

GUTIERRE — una noche entré
en su casa, sentí ruido
en su cuadra, llegué,
y al mismo tiempo que ya
fuí a entrar, pude el bulto ver
de un hombre, que se arrojó
del balcón; bajé tras el,
y sin conocerle, al fin
pudo escaparse por pies.

ARIAS (AP.) — ¡Válgame el cielo! ¿Qué es esto
que miro? (I:911-20)

Gutierre's story is really something of a commonplace. Its elements are the stock-in-trade of dozens of capa y espada plays,[19] and its essential outlines could well have been anticipated. Arias' reaction is not so predictable. His anxious surprise and bewilderment make it clear that he was implicated in what happened. So the King's plan seems to be working in ways that he perhaps had not anticipated, and that may therefore escape his control.

So Gutierre continues explaining against a background of mounting suspense. The audience will be wondering at what point Leonor will intervene; and at what time Arias, too, will step in, and when his precise involvement will be made clear:

GUTIERRE Y aunque escuché
satisfacciones, y nunca
di a mi agravio entera fe,
fué bastante este aprehensión
a no casarme; porque
si amor y honor son pasiones
del ánimo, a mi entender,
quien hizo al amor ofensa,
se le hace al honor en él;
porque el agravio del gusto
al alma toca también. (I:922-32)

One thing, at least, emerges clearly from the speech - and that is Gutierre's uncertainty. He seems uncertain about the rightness of his earlier treatment of Leonor, and uncertain about his present situation, and the best way of justifying himself before the King.

He admits that he heard explanations that exonerated Leonor from blame and that they were not of the kind to be easily discounted. So much is implied in the word "satisfacciones";[20] had Calderón wished Gutierre to express doubt, he would have phrased it differently. Indeed, this admission almost indicates a certain candour - but Gutierre is characteristically cautious in omitting to tell the precise nature of the satisfacciones he received. As a result, his statement raises as

many questions as it provides answers - for if he did receive satisfactory explanations, then why did he not proceed with the marriage?

One gets the impression that there was something about the explanations he could not swallow, as if something was sticking in his throat - and Gutierre goes on to explain this "something" in only the most general of terms. In doing so, he encounters another difficulty. He reached an important decision on what may appear to be trivial grounds; to justify himself, he wishes to explain himself in terms that transcend the specific situation, and relate instead to universal values. One is given the sense of a man treading unfamiliar intellectual ground, of a man not quite sure whether he has got his terms right. Hence the half-apologetic "a mi entender": "I'm only a layman, but...".

His explanation could be taken as a cue for the most subtle of theological arguments, and were this an auto, one can easily imagine the skill with which Calderón would put them. But such a treatment is out of place in this context, in which he presents us with an untrained mind grappling with issues unfamiliar to him in an entirely secular situation. The clerics in the tertulia, however, will feel themselves at home: they will be on the alert for flaws in Gutierre's reasoning.(21)

Gutierre is seeking to justify a transformation from love into aversion. Love, to explain it in the vaguest of terms, is "the simple tendency towards a good thing"(22) and desire,

> "which arises from love, is a tendency towards a good thing that is not yet possessed but perfectly possessable. ...Hate, the opposite of love, is the turning away from an evil thing. Aversion arises from hate as an actual repugnance to an evil thing presenting itself..." (23)

We can only desire the good;(24) in Gutierre's terms, he could only

desire what was honourable. The appearance of the man in the room was both a blow to his honour and to his desire - "agravio del gusto" - in that it turned Leonor from an honourable, and therefore desirable, object of Gutierre's love into a dishonourable, and therefore undesirable, object from which he turned away. Once again, his scrupulous punctiliousness has something about it that is repugnant.

On stage, events are moving fast, and in a sense such reflections are out of place. Calderón hardly gives his audience the leisure to dwell on them. But it is still valuable to reflect for a while on the impression Gutierre leaves us with, because it is a masterful preparation for the events of the following two acts. One is given an uneasy sense of a man with a disconcerting ability to detach himself from his human feelings of warmth, compassion, and the ability to forgive;(25) of a man a prey to suspicions of which he feels somewhat ashamed and is unwillingly openly to confess to.(26) Above all, there is a sense that beneath the apparent clarity of cut and dried values there lurks a dangerous moral confusion.

In terms of what is actually happening on stage, however, our attention is caught up in the suspense. The King's aside has led us to expect an intervention from Leonor; Arias' aside has led us to expect an intervention from him. Leonor strikes first.

SALE DOÑA LEONOR

LEONOR
Vuestra Majestad perdone;
que no puedo detener
el golpe a tantas desdichas
que han llegado de tropel. (I:933-6)

Up to I:899, things seemed to be going very well for Leonor. Gutierre had been covered in confusion; the King was working himself up to a rage. Like any good trial scene, this one contains sudden

changes in fortune for all the participants. For now, Leonor's position has changed drastically. New facts have emerged which she had taken care to conceal from the King and which now make her case look decidedly shaky. Gutierre's omission of the mitigating factors she must have offered him also puts her behaviour in the worst possible light. So there are very pressing reasons for her to emerge.

Her sudden appearance, of course, will cause a sensation. Gutierre and Arias, in particular, will react to it very strongly indeed. But the King has been prepared for it; and he reacts with delight:

REY (AP.) ¡Vive Dios, que me engañaba!
La prueba sucedió bien. (I:937-8)

He feels his test has been most successful; but Calderón makes it hard for us to guess exactly why he thinks he has succeeded so well, or precisely what conclusions he has drawn from it. His exclamation is most equivocal, in the sense that we have no way of telling who is the subject of "engañaba". Now it could be said that Leonor has been deceiving him, in that she at least implied that Gutierre never had any intention of marrying her, but just used a promise of marriage as a means of having intercourse with her.(27) "In fact", however, according to Gutierre, he had every intention of marrying her, but only failed to do so, reluctantly, because he saw a man in her room. This side of the story was something she tried to cover up. But it is important to keep this "in fact" firmly between quotation marks, because this "fact" is supported only by Gutierre - who is just as likely to be the subject of "engañaba".(28) He is more likely to be so, if anything, given what the King said earlier, when he confided in us that the whole point of his prueba was:

REY porque pueda responder
Leonor, si aquéste me engaña. (I:906-7)

- in other words, to give Leonor the chance to counter any lies Gutierre might try to get accepted about what happened. This, it seems, is in fact what is just about to occur.

Calderón, I think almost mischievously, leaves yet another option open to us - to conclude that the whole test is simply ridiculous. Whether Gutierre is telling the truth or not, Leonor would probably come out anyway; and what she is about to say may well be just another lie fabricated to suit her purpose. So what has happened so far has proved nothing, and the King is deceiving himself in thinking his absurd test has been of any use at all.(29) Of course, the fact that Arias soon comes forward with a story that presumably would corroborate Leonor's, might well disprove this last hypothesis - if only he had left Leonor the time to speak. Perhaps her story would have been different...

It may be helpful to pause for a moment to reflect on the instructions that the King had originally given Leonor. They, too, were ambiguous and puzzling:

REY Aquese cancel
os encubra, aquí aguardad,
hasta que salgáis después. (I:698-700)

Obviously, the immediate problem for Leonor is to decide when she can come out. "Hasta que salgáis después" is vague, to say the least, and as we know from the King's aside (I:904-10), intentionally so. We know, whilst she does not, that the King intends her to come out whenever she feels that Gutierre's statements require refutation. If she does not come out, then the King will interpret that as a sign of guilt. So in coming out, she is in fact doing the best possible thing in her favour - and the King's aside (I:937-8) confirms that he is favourably

impressed by her appearance.

But, ironically enough, she is terrified that her action will count against her. For the King had told her to wait (I:699); and so a sense of obedience restrains her. That is why she fears that her emergence will be taken as an act of atrevimiento for which she might be severely punished:

LEONOR
oyendo contra mi honor
presunciones, fuera ley
injusta que yo, cobarde,
dejara de responder;
que menos importa perder
la vida, cuando me dé
este atrevimiento muerte,
que vida y honor perder. (I:939-46)

This could well be more than an apology to the King; it could also be acted as a heavy hint to Arias, to try to compel him to speak. But he stays silent until Leonor mentions him by name. Then he is forced to break his silence:

LEONOR
Don Arias entró en mi casa....

ARIAS
Señora, espera, detén
la voz. Vuestra Majestad
licencia, señor, me dé
porque el honor desta dama
me toca a mí defender. (I:947-52)

These are fine-sounding words; yet they have a hollow ring. For obviously Arias could have spoken up before; he has certainly been aware of his involvement for quite some time.(30) The fact that he does not speak until he is forced to suggests that he would much rather have kept his mouth shut. His interruption of Leonor's speech may even suggest that he wishes to silence her, prevent her disclosing information unpalatable to him - rather than uncover evidence to exonerate her. All this is speculation, of course, and easily dismissed as such. But in this case

speculation is all we have to work on. The facts are dubious, and every person's motives are questionable. Calderón has involved us in the judicial procedure a little uncomfortably.

It is worth pausing at this point to note the extraordinary contrast with the source-play. Calderón has retained the basic elements of the plot, but has completely transformed the whole feeling of the scene. Margarita has tangible proof of her accusations - where Leonor has none. Jacinto is treated harshly by the King; but he responds with a straightforward declaration of loyalty. It is worth quoting at some length, because the sentiments it expresses are almost totally absent from Calderón's play:

JACINTO nunca ha merecido
mi amor tal premio, e ignoro,
cuando tan firme os adoro,
quien causa de aquesto ha sido;
porque sé yo sin temor,
entre Cides y entre fieras,
tremolando sus banderas,
dar muestras de mi valor;
y aunque sentirme pudiera,
señor, de aquéste, sospecho
es muy leal este pecho,
y quien eres considera;
demás que los reyes son
vicedioses en la tierra,
en quien la deidad se encierra,
que rige su corazón. (p. 128b)

Such words belong to a much more innocent world than Calderón's. One has a sense that the man's loyalty, his deep reverence for the King, his manly contempt for tale-bearers and his sheer physical courage will somehow carry him through. These are portrayed as adequate responses to the situation, and their validity is never questioned. Everything is so much more straightforward. The King confronts Jacinto with Margarita's irrefutable evidence; unlike Gutierre, Jacinto does not hedge his response, for whatever dubious reasons. He takes it like a

man, and comes straight out with the truth:

JACINTO
Vide en su estrado
sentado con ella un hombre
cuya calidad y nombre
no supe, porque embozado
se me fué; que a no huir,
yo también le castigara... (p. 129a)

Here again, the evidence is clear: the man was seen talking with Margarita. There are no "bultos" lurking in darkened rooms, no careful and scrupulous siftings of evidence. Álvaro, unlike Arias, responds totally straightforwardly. He hesitates for a moment, it is true, but his hesitation is for perfectly understandable reasons, which are explained to us in an aside (p. 128a). Then he challenges Jacinto in the approved manner:

ÁLVARO
Yo sé, don Jacinto bien,
que aquese hombre no huyó,
y sé que no os agravió,
y sé que es hombre de bien. (p. 128b)

What we get is the simple excitement of an impending fight, with the added spice of it taking place in the presence of a King. So when Álvaro and Jacinto reach for their swords, physical conflict between the two men seems natural and inevitable. Of course, they are misbehaving in the presence of the King; but he simply packs them off to a tower and the problem is solved.

The whole affair is quickly over:

REY
¿Aquí tanta libertad?
¡Holá! Soldados, llevad
presto a una torre los dos.

JACINTO
Decid, ¿qué pesares, cielos
son estos que me dáis?
¡Cielos, aquí me afrentáis,
y allá me matáis de celos! (p. 129b)

A comic incident occurs before they are carried off; Galindo intervenes,

with a typical piece of comic fanfarronía that ends in flight. The King expresses concern at what has happened, but tries to minimise the hurt inflicted on Margarita:

REY pesaroso
he quedado; quiero entrar
por si puedo consolar
a Margarita. (p. 130a)

So although justice has not been done as he would have wished it, the King at least remains aware of the woman's sufferings. Enrique is left alone on stage, and the act closes on his gloating anticipation of his future prospects:

INFANTE Dichoso
soy; esta noche, la pena
que me mata ha de acabar.
Quisiera, ¡o Mayor! volar
a tu quinta: el cielo ordena
mi dicha, pues queda preso
don Jacinto en esta torre:
mi desdicha el nombre borre
con tan extraño suceso. (p. 130a)

So in the next two acts we can anticipate a passionate scene between Mayor and Enrique; and, given Jacinto's jealousy, we can look forward to a bloody finale. But the basic values that underpin the characters' behaviour go unchallenged; and the only real problem facing the dramatist, and the audience, is to stave off tedium with a novel form of murder.(31)

There are no real dilemmas here, no grounds for doubt. Everything goes according to plan; one is on absolutely familiar ground. The game is played according to the rules, and the rules are accessible and easy to understand. There is really no need to think at all.

Calderón's play is a radical departure from such a safely ordered world. He has constructed the scene so as to cut the ground away from

underneath our feet. We no longer know who to believe, and the constant challenge to the characters' veracity is paralleled by a constant challenge to the beliefs they declare themselves to uphold.

In threatening to come to blows, for instance, both Arias and Gutierre are only acting according to a familiar pattern. Arias' narrative has exonerated Leonor, and is a challenge to Gutierre. As in the source-play, it gains a certain excitement from the fact that it must end in a duel. The conflict between Arias and Gutierre will lead them both into conflict with the King. Indeed the King is furious, for although Arias and Gutierre have stuck to the rules of one game - the one played between caballeros - they have broken the rules of another - that played between caballeros and the King. As player and referee, the King will not stand for it: they get sent off the field.

By contrast to the King of the source-play, Calderón's Pedro is given a much more spectacular outburst of rage:

REY ¿Qué es esto?
¿Cómo las manos tenéis
en las espadas delante
de mí? ¿No tembláis de ver
mi semblante? ¿Dónde estoy,
hay soberbia ni altivez?
Presos los llevad al punto;
en dos torres los tened;
y agradeced que no os pongo
las cabezas a mis pies. VASE. (I:983-92)

The King sweeps off the stage in the climax of his wrath. Predictably, this has given rise to much argument. Some would argue that this shows a lamentable lack of self-control; others that it shows a commendable regard for the dignity of the royal person.(32)

The main point seems to me to be that the King, in his preoccupation with his own dignity, completely forgets his obligations to Leonor. So his promise of justice for her is shown to be a hollow one.(33)

This is characteristic of each of the other male characters on stage; they leave one by one, each striking a self-obsessed pose as they do so.(34)

So Pedro strikes the pose of a King, fearful in his just wrath; Arias that of a noble gentleman suffering in defence of a lady:

ARIAS Si perdió Leonor por mí
su opinión, por mí también
la tendrá; que esto se debe
al honor de una mujer. VASE. (I:993-6)

The irony behind Arias' pose is that his concern for his reputation as a gentleman who defends a lady's honour has led him to act in a way that is utterly useless to her - indeed leaves her alone and undefended.

Gutierre strikes a similar chivalresque pose.(35) As is proper, he is all concern for his wife:

GUTIERRE No siento en desdicha tal
ver riguroso y cruel
al Rey; sólo siento que hoy,
Mencía, no te he de ver. VASE. (I:997-1000)

The really significant omission here is the expression of jealousy to be found in the source-play. Jealousy does not befit a gentleman; it is as if Calderón wishes to leave in our minds the image of a man sincerely trying to act the part of a true gentleman.

Enrique, by contrast, displays a certain duplicity. There is a marked contrast between the calculating slyness of his remark to the audience and the romantic pose assumed for public consumption:

ENRIQUE (AP.) Con ocasión de la caza,
preso Gutierre, podré
ver esta tarde a Mencía.

Don Diego, conmigo ven;
que tengo de porfiar
hasta morir, o vencer. (I:1001-6)

The reference is to Lope's play.[36] Enrique wants to portray himself as a romantic hero who, like Macías, is doomed to suffer in his love for a woman betrothed to another. But our response to his pose can hardly be sympathetic. Macías' rival was a man of greater social status; in courting his wife, Macías did indeed run a very real risk of death. Yet his love, which Lope meant to reflect a noble ideal,[37] was so strong as to overrule petty concern for his personal safety. There is a certain nobility to be found in his tragic persistence in a love that could only lead to personal ruin and to eventual death. The lover's death does indeed mark the climax of the play; the jealous husband stabs him as he languishes in prison.

There could hardly be a greater ironic contrast between Macías and Enrique. Enrique is not inferior to his rival, but infinitely superior in social status; it is not the lover who is in prison, but the husband. The risks this lover runs are absolutely minimal, and his romantic pose is infused with a shameless cynicism.

So as each of the men leave, we find them taking refuge in acceptable roles, and striking suitable poses. Their outlook is exclusively self-centred; all completely forget the existence of the woman on whose behalf, or against whom, they are supposedly acting. This is reinforced by the staging; in succession, the men leave one by one, and Leonor is left alone. She has been forgotten; like the wounded on the battlefield, she has been left for dead. She is helpless, and vents her rage in words. She pronounces the most fearful curse on Gutierre:

LEONOR ¡Muerta quedo! ¡Plegue a Dios,
ingrato, aleve y cruel,
falso, engañador, fingido,
sin fe, sin Dios, y sin ley,
que como inocente pierdo
mi honor, venganza me dé
el cielo! ¡El mismo dolor
sientas que siento, y a ver
llegues, bañado en tu sangre,
deshonras tuyas, porque
mueras con las mismas armas
que matas, amén, amén!
¡Ay de mí!, honor perdí;
¡ay de mí!, mi muerte hallé. VASE. (I:1007-20)

Perhaps it is difficult for us to feel the force of this. For one thing, the full venom of this passionate outburst hardly comes across on the printed page - we get a whiff of it, and even that is enough to make us reel. But even when spoken by an actress capable of conveying such unrestrained rage, we would perhaps still miss the fear and shock inspired by such a curse. We have greatly lost touch with the supernatural, and so curses do not greatly impress us.

We can get some idea of their impact, when we consider that a much milder curse pronounced by Casandra on Paris in Calderón's and Zabaletas' Troya abrasada was marked as suitable for censorship in 1644.(38) Leonor's curse is couched in much stronger terms, and one can guess that it would be very strong dramatic material indeed that would make a big impression on its audience.

Leonor's call for revenge reminds us of the Old Testament law, the old law that read:

> "Wherever hurt is done, you shall give life for life,
> eye for eye, tooth for tooth..." (39)

Such a law appeals to our sense of natural justice, and is a hard one to forget, in spite of Christ's transformation of it into a law of forgiveness:

> "Do not set yourself against the man who wrongs you. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn and offer him your left." (40)

St. Augustine, in his commentary on the passage, whilst stressing the perfection of the law laid down by Christ, also makes the point that the Mosaic law acted as a restraining and merciful influence:

> "for it is not easy to find anyone who, when he has just received a blow, wishes merely to return it... He who pays back just as much as he has received already forgives something: for the party who injures does not deserve merely as much punishment as the man who was injured by him has innocently suffered." (41)

Here, patristic theology confirms a fellow-feeling; it is easy to understand, forgive, and even assent to the terms of Leonor's curse, the more so in that she is refraining from taking vengeance into her own hands, and instead is placing it into the hands of providence.

But closer inspection reveals a dimension of terrible injustice. Her words are founded on the common equation of dishonour with death. She has been dishonoured, and therefore she is dead (I:1007). Gutierre caused her dishonour, and so Gutierre caused her death. She was innocent, and did not deserve to suffer (I:1011). So she hopes that Gutierre will be dishonoured as she has been, that, like her, he will suffer death. "A life for a life...". But Gutierre cannot be "killed" in the same way that Leonor has been. A man can "kill" a woman by courting her, compromising her, then leaving her - but a woman cannot "kill" a man that way. A married man like Gutierre can only be "killed" by his wife's unfaithfulness. The husband will be innocent of his wife's transgression, but even so will still suffer for it.(42) So, if this occurs, then the terms of Leonor's "justice" will be fulfilled, for his innocent suffering will match hers.

Yet, however much we may sympathise, we know that this can be no justice. For one thing, justice cannot truly exist without forgiveness and mercy. Leonor, clearly, has neither. Her curse is also a measure of her powerlessness, she cannot act to redeem herself, but a man can. The men to whom she entrusted her honour have all deserted her.

Here enters the second dimension of injustice. For whilst Leonor can do nothing to alleviate her suffering, Gutierre can. He can take steps to secure his "resurrection" through an act of vengeance. This vengeance will be the murder of his wife. So Mencía's physical death is added to Gutierre's purely metaphorical death, and the scales are tipped. Particularly so, when although Gutierre may be guilty, Mencía is guiltless.

Leonor calls for Providence to accomplish her revenge (I:1007); this adds yet another dimension to the problem. "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay".(43) So Leonor calls on a revengeful Lord not to forget her suffering.

"Plegue a Dios..." she cries; and although we do not know what it may please God to do, it seems as if her prayer has already been answered. For we already know that Enrique is going to see Mencía; we know that the outcome of that visit will be Gutierre's dishonour. So he will suffer "lo que siento"; he will suffer as a wronged innocent,(44) and we can guess that the outcome of Gutierre's dishonour will be Mencía's death. So he <u>will</u> see, to adapt the text, "bañado en su sangre deshonras suyas".

But the blood will only be his by proxy. Leonor has lost her honour; she is convinced she is as good as dead; yet a metaphorically dead woman will be exchanged for a bloodless corpse. Innocence will suffer, but not as a punishment for Gutierre's guilt, but by Mencía's

monstrously unjust murder.

Enrique has just left the stage to initiate the train of events that Leonor demands - so perhaps he is a tool of Providence. She demands of Providence a monstrous injustice - and it seems her demand is to be fulfilled.

Up to now, we have been involved in a series of apparently intractable problems to do with justice, kingship, social values and conventions. Leonor's curse jerks these problems onto a divine plane. We are not simply confronted with a collapse of belief in social values; it seems we are to be confronted with a crisis of faith.

NOTES

(1) In particular, these were the reasons why he chose to accompany Enrique to Sevilla (I:495-511)

(2) Cruickshank explores the theme in his article on 'Adultery in El médico de su honra'. There is no need to emphasise the importance the theme of sickness and cure will gain in the course of the play; see Alan Soons, 'The Convergence of Doctrine and Symbol in El médico de su honra', RF 72 (1960), pp. 370-80, especially p. 375: "the kingdom is in ill-health, and Gutierre makes the typical, and fatal mistake of supposing that it is the King who can restore health to Spain".

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(3) Mariana writes that at the death of Pedro "se abrió el camino y se dió lugar a un nuevo linaje y descendencia de reyes, y con él una nueva luz alumbró el mundo, y la deseada paz se mostró dichosamente a la tierra", Historia de España, ed. cit., p. 494.

(4) Cf. I:174-5.

(5) REY Oigamos a la otra parte
disculpas suyas; que es bien
guardar el segundo oído
para quien llega después. (I:685-8)

(6) Moles, for one, would have approved of Gutierre here; he writes that although a ruler's anger is a terrible thing to have to face, "ni son por esto mas poderosos los Principes, cuyas razones asperas, y rigurosas, solo ofenden a los coraçones pusilanimes, y estrechos, que los grandes, y dilatos, tienen en los infortunios valor, y esfuerço.", Audiencia de Principes, fol. 16v.

(7) The decline in Spain's military and political fortunes seems to have been accompanied by great anxiety concerning the collapse of old values; and some plays appear to be specifically directed to this anxiety, and seek to uphold the old values of the kind that "made Spain great". Doubtless, a similar phenomenon could be traced in Britain, following the collapse of our imperialist ambitions. A good example of such a play would be Alarcón's Los pechos privilegiados, ed. Agustín Millares Carlo (Clásicos Castellanos).

(8) It is not easy to pin down the precise meaning of "de una mano el interes". Jones interprets it as meaning "although I never promised to marry her" (P. 33, n. 1). Margaret Wilson interprets the phrase differently: "Gutierre... emphasises that not merely is Leonor's virginity intact, he has never even so much as held her hand" ('Comedia Lovers and the Proprieties, BCom 24 (1972), p. 31). That is a little too strict for my taste. Her conclusion is significant: "It seems necessary to conclude

necessary to conclude that neither Leonor nor the King, nor perhaps even Calderón himself, is altogether clear what does constitute impropriety and dishonour" (ibid., p. 34). I would say that Leonor is certain what constitutes dishonour - since she is suffering it; I suspect that Calderón is out to challenge such traditional values.

(9) Cf. I:677-84.

(10) Lib. V, Tit. 1, lei 5.

(11) "Los amores y noviazgos clandestinos en el mundo dramático-social de Calderón" in Hacia Calderón: segundo coloquio anglo-germano, ed. Hans Flasche (Berlin, 1971), p. 81.

(12) "De jure" marriages had been declared invalid by the Council of Trent; but they still retained a certain force in the minds of theatre audiences, it seems; cf. A. A. Parker, art. cit, p. 81.

(13) The King has realised this; it is one of the sources of his hesitation (I:677-80),

(14) A recent article points out that the theatre audience might well also have been aware of the fact that Pedro himself was reputed to have killed his wife on suspicion of adultery; see I. Benabu, 'Further Thoughts on the Ending of El médico de su honra', BHS 59 (1982), pp. 26-32. At the same time, of course, Pedro was also committing adultery with María de la Padilla. Clearly there are many dramatic possibilities here, and it would be interesting to speculate as to why Calderón decided not to make explicit use of them. The source-play contains a little scene in which the King discusses his forthcoming marriage (ed. cit., pp. 137-8); one must assume it was a deliberate decision on Calderon's part to cut it. Philip IV was himself hardly a model of marital fidelity. For the historic background to the killing of Pedro's wife, see G. Laplane, 'La mort de Blanche de Bourbon', Rev. Hisp. 66 (1964), pp. 5-16.

(15) Here again, Mariana's account in his Historia de España is the best source for such legendary material.

(16) I Kings 3. 28.

(17) The stories of Sancho's judgements on his island are a good example of tales in this tradition. See Don Quixote, II, cap. 45. The King Pedro of the stories who is Justiciero also displays such qualities of cunning; the King Pedro of El Rey don Pedro en Madrid is a good example. The play's authorship has been disputed. It is ascribed to Tirso de Molina and edited by Blanca de los Rios in Tirso de Molina, Obras Dramáticas Completas, vol. III (Madrid, 1958), pp. 89-165.

(18) In the same way, the key line of Leonor's tale "Dióme palabra que sería mi esposo" (I:649), comes as a distinct anti-climax.

(19) Two examples that spring immediately to mind are in Casa con dos puertas (ed. cit., p. 291a) and El mágico prodigioso (Obras completas I, p. 617b)

(20) "La razón, acción, o modo con que se sossiega y responde enteramente a alguna quexa, sentimiento o razón contraria", Autoridades, s.v.

(21) See N. D. Shergold, A History of the Spanish Stage (Oxford, 1967), the chapter 'The Actors and their Audience'.

(22) New Catholic Encyclopaedia, s.v. "Appetite".

(23) Ibid.

(24 Cf. A.A. Parker's note to lines 52-3 in his edition of No hay mas fortuna que Dios .

(25) Perhaps this is given its most horrifying expression at III:408-9:

GUTIERRE ¿Quién vió en tantos enojos
matar las manos, y llorar los ojos?

(26) His words at I:924-6 are a kind of preliminary to his anguished confrontation with his own feelings of suspicion, expressed so powerfully in his famous monologues of II:560-692 and 841-95.

(27) Cf. I:649-55.

(28) Cruickshank has pointed out this ambiguity ("Calderón's King Pedro - just or unjust?', loc. cit., p. 126). But he thinks the subject of the verb is Leonor; I don't think it is so straightforward.

(29) Cruickshank (art. cit., p. 126) argues that the fact that some sort of truth eventually emerges has little to do with the King's stratagem: "Pedro's reasoning is faulty and liable to lead him to make a wrong judgement. It is only by chance that he does not". Watson, of course, takes the opposite view (art. cit., p. 341).

(30) Within the play, he could have known at I:834-6.

(31) This is almost made explicit in the source-play; as he makes his exit to find the barber, don Jacinto says:

JACINTO un modo nuevo ha de ver
el mundo para matar. (p. 152a)

(32) Cf. Watson, art. cit., pp. 342-3; and Cruickshank, art. cit., pp. 126-7. Watson noticed that Calderón has changed the one tower of the source-play into the two towers of I:990: "This is a good example of the care with which Calderón adapted his sources..." (art. cit., p. 343, n. 41). I suspect it is almost a joke on Calderón's part. Whether he imprisons Arias and Gutierre in one tower or in two, the King's action solves nothing.

(33) Later on, of course, the King meets Leonor in the street, and rather guiltily remembers his promise (III:758-65). The fact that Gutierre just happens to have rather conveniently murdered his wife gives the king the chance to keep it. There is a strong vein of black humour here; Calderón seems to have been very much aware of the human weaknesses of rulers and the extent to which their actions and policies were dictated by chance.

(34) The scene has been tidied up by Calderón. He has made the rather straggly series of exits of the source-play into something much more ordered; the gracioso's intervention, which diminishes the scene's tension, has been omitted so as to lead up to the climax of Leonor's speech.

(35) In their editions, Valbuena Briones and C. A. Jones mark Gutierre's lines at I:997-1000 as an aside. I see no reason for this. Like Arias' exit line at I:993-6 and Enrique's at 1004-6 they are designed for public consumption. They also lead into Enrique's plot at I:1001. His lines I:1001-3 are very different; they are a private declaration of dishonest and dishonourable intent and should be delivered as such.

(36) Lope de Vega, Porfiar hasta morir, ed. E. Allison Peers (Liverpool, 1934). Macías delivers the line as he dies on stage "atravesado con una lanza" at the end of act III (p. 94). Calderón does not seem to have been terribly impressed by the play; whenever Macías is referred to in his work, he is an object of ridicule. Cf., Para vencer amor, querer vencerle, Obras Completas, II, p. 546b, ¿Cuál es mayor perfección?, ibid., p. 1629b; No hay cosa como callar, ed. cit., II:484.

(37) See D.R. Larson, The Honour Plays of Lope de Vega (Harvard, 1977), pp. 122-30. For Larson, Macías is "the perfect courtly lover". See also Otis H. Green, Spain and the Western Tradition (Madison, 1963), I, p. 237-40.

(38) The play has been edited by G.T. Northup in 'Troya abrasada de Pedro Calderón de la Barca y Juan de Zabaleta', Rev. Hisp. 29 (1913), pp. 195-346. Casandra's curse occurs in act I (written by Zabaleta), lines 431 ff. See E.M. Wilson, 'Calderón and the Stage-Censor in the Seventeenth Century: a Provisional Study', Symposium (1961), pp. 165-84. Wilson does point out that 1644 was a year in which playwrights had to take much greater care over their subject matter than in 1635 (p. 169); but presumably this does not alter the fact that such a curse pronounced on stage could be seen as offensive.

(39) Exodus 21. 24

(40) Matthew 5. 39

(41) St. Augustine, Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, trans. Findlay, (New York, 1888), pp. 24-5 (I, 19, paras. 56-7).

(42) This is the substance of the complaints of other honour play protagonists against the law of honour. See El pintor de su deshonra, III: 489-510; A secreto agravio, secreta venganza, III: 254-78.

(43) Romans 12. 19, referring back to Deuteronomy 32. 35.

(44) And rage against the injustice of it:

GUTIERRE ¿Qué injusta ley condena
que muera el inocente, que padezca? (II:637-8)

C O N C L U S I O N

"hombre bien nacido, en fin..."

There we must leave the play. I feel a certain reluctance - and that reluctance is one measure of Calderón's success. Before we conclude, we need to remind ourselves of the tasks he had set out to accomplish in this first act.

To begin with, he had to present his characters and their interrelationships in a clear and interesting way. This sounds like a minimal requirement; but it is surprising how many dramatists fail to meet it. In Calderón's case, this meant he had three main sets of interlocking relationships to communicate: the King's relationship with Enrique, Enrique's relationship with Mencía, and Gutierre's relationship with Leonor. As we have seen, each of these presented him with a different set of problems, and he handled them in different ways.

He could count on his audience having some prior knowledge of the character of King Pedro and of his struggles with his brother Enrique. This knowledge would have been gained through reading history, hearing ballads, or watching other plays, and so Calderón could count on it being present in the minds of his audience.(1) This means that he had no need to make any specific mention of the conflict; it was enough for him simply to hint at it. So the conflict between the two brothers is always implied, never directly stated. We can often see it not so much in the actual words the characters speak as in their manner towards each other - in the delayed first entrance of the King, his equivocal response to Enrique's accident (I:5-26), and Enrique's less than friendly response to him (I:809-13).

We have suggested that Calderón did not need to treat of the matter directly - and he makes this serve his purpose. It is as if the conflict between the two brothers was a taboo subject, one that can never be mentioned directly. Only once it is hinted at more or less openly - and then it provokes an immediate, frightened call for

silence and circumspection (I:25-35). Diego's paranoia, Gutierre's over-elaborate courtesies and punctilious attempts to keep on the right side of both parties, the exaggerated and sometimes equivocal flattery - all these hints and diplomatic evasions accumulate to give an impression of a kingdom divided against itself, whose members live in a constant state of insecurity and mutual suspicion.(2)

Divisions and strife within the state are reflected in the characters' personal lives. So it is not surprising to find Calderón using a very similar technique to communicate Enrique's past affair with Mencía. He spends more time over this particular strand of exposition, partly because he cannot count quite so dependably on his audience's prior knowledge, but mainly, of course, because in this play, at least, Mencía is a rather more important character than either Enrique or Pedro. But the basic technique is similar. At no time are we ever given specific information about the facts of the case. Instead, we have to rely on inference and innuendo, on a particular gesture or a certain tone of voice. What is communicated instead, much more powerfully and directly, are Mencía's feelings - when she is not forced to conceal them - her sense of sadness and of loss.

The factual extent of her involvement is never clarified, and this is only appropriate in a play which is to explore so many of the dimensions of jealousy. For jealousy, as its main sufferer admits, is not a matter of facts, not something that can be pinned down:

GUTIERRE hombres como yo
no ven; basta que imaginen,
que sospechen, que prevengan,
que recelen, que adivinen,
que.....no sé como lo diga;
que no hay voz que signifique
una cosa, que no sea
un átomo indivisible. (III:79-86)

Indeed, when we are given anything that even remotely approaches a factual discussion of the affair, we are given two contradictory views - one from Enrique which may exaggerate its importance (I:240-76), and another from Mencía, which may underestimate it (I:277-306).

When it comes to communicating Leonor's involvement with Gutierre, Calderón uses this rather disquieting technique at greater length. For what may initially appear to be a straightforward exposition of the facts in a suitable dramatic setting - Leonor's speech to the King (I:609-72) - turns out to be something rather different. The way Calderón has written the speech, the way the actress will deliver it, and subsequent events all point to it being at best a partial explanation of what occurred, and at worst a false one. Certain truths have been suppressed, other facts have been given undue weight. In short, Leonor's evidence cannot be trusted. But neither can Gutierre's (I:837-75, 911-32); and since both sets of evidence conflict, we have somehow to choose between them. The King's abortive ruse, which was intended to clarify the issue (I:904-10), in the end only confuses it. We are left with a disquieting image of the inadequacies of human justice. Each of the three characters concerned has a particular axe to grind, a partial and one-sided view of justice which they seek to impose on the others. Justice for Leonor seems to consist in an act that will avenge her suffering, justice for Gutierre seems to consist in a justification of his abandoning Leonor to marry Mencía, and justice for the King seems to consist in whatever will bring him prestige and consolidate what surely must be a very shaky reputation as "Justiciero".(3)

This adds up to a sad, almost despairing, picture of human society - as one torn with deep divisions, one in which the regulating forces that should help heal these divisions, such as the family and the

justice dispensed by the King, seem only to deepen and intensify them.[4] By the end of the act, the play has approached an even deeper level of despair, one that seems to question even the workings of divine justice.[5]

All in all it is a bleak picture. Its bleakness deepens as the play progresses, until by the very end we are left with a most powerful expression of an almost total disillusionment with secular institutions and values.[6]

One then needs to ask if that is all the play has to offer. The answer depends on the importance attached to one other factor we have so far failed to mention. For Calderón had also to find a place for a character considered indispensable by actors and audience alike - the gracioso.

Such a comic actor could easily seem very much out of place in a drama as sad and as serious as this one, and we have already noted how Calderón makes a virtue out of a necessity in the scene he wrote for Coquín and the King, and the ways in which that scene contributes to the general critique of royal justice. But I suspect there is much more involved.

Traditionally, as we know, the gracioso was presented as almost the exact opposite of the play's main character. Whilst the latter represented nobility, dignity and idealism, the former was ignoble, undignified and motivated by the basest of motives.

We can see this traditional division at the beginning of the play. Gutierre is presented as a serious character with at least an outward show of dignity, whilst Coquín on the other hand has not the slightest trace of dignity or seriousness about him. Gutierre belongs to the nobility; Coquín belongs to the stable (I:460-65).

This contrast between the two persists throughout the play, at least on one level; but on another, a curious and unexpected development takes place. Gutierre's attempts to live an existence on a noble plane, and thus to preserve his honour, lead him to lie, cheat and dissemble. In a certain way he sinks down the social scale, until he finally takes on the role of barber-surgeon to murder his wife in a deceitful, cruel and cold-blooded way. By the end, he has become a kind of grisly tradesman:

GUTIERRE Los que de un oficio tratan,
ponen, señor, a las puertas
un escudo de sus armas:
trato en honor, y así pongo
mi mano en sangre bañada
a la puerta... (III:885-90)

For us, of course, there is no particular degradation involved in practising a trade; but for a member of the "noble" class to which Gutierre aspires, one which abhorred trading, and particularly abhorred "tainted" professions, such as barber-surgery, the degradation is complete.(7)

But while Gutierre has been falling, Coquín has been rising. In the first act, Gutierre is disgraced and sent to prison, whilst Coquín has gained privileged access to the King's person and can wear his hat like a grandee. Their paths intersect, appropriately enough in the middle of the second act.

Gutierre has been released on parole. He has promised his jailer that he will return at dawn, and when he reminds Coquín of that promise, Coquín suggests he break his word. Naturally enough, Gutierre is indignant at the suggestion; it seems to typify all that is base in a villano's disregard for what is gentlemanly, noble and correct:

GUTIERRE ¡Vive Dios, necio, villano,
que te mate por mi mano!
¿Pues tú me has de aconsejar
tan vil acción, sin mirar
la confianza que aquí
hizo el alcaide de mí? (II:244-9)

But Coquín holds his ground, for he is frightened of the King. He suspects Gutierre will be executed, and does not want to be involved in his downfall. So he admits to Gutierre that he is thinking of leaving him. Here again, Gutierre is flabbergasted:

COQUÍN Señor, yo llego a dudar
(que soy más desconfiado)
de la condición del Rey;
y así el honor de esa ley
no se entiende en el criado;
y hoy estoy determinado
a dejarte y no volver.

GUTIERRE ¿Dejarme tú?

COQUÍN ¿Qué hé de hacer?

GUTIERRE ¿Y de ti, qué han de decir?

COQUÍN ¿Y heme de dejar morir
por sólo bien parecer? (II:250-60)

It seems clear that we are dealing with deeper issues here. Coquín is opposing his lowlier view of life to Gutierre's. The law of the noble, he asserts, does not apply to the servant. A noble man may very well be prepared to die simply for the sake of appearances, but he is not.

Of course, Gutierre is not only prepared to die for appearances' sake - which some might find noble - he is also prepared to kill.(8)

Coquín takes a very different course of action. Whilst Gutierre believes the worst of Mencía and prepares to kill her, Coquín steadfastly believes in her innocence and does his best to protect her. He tries first of all to shield her from Gutierre (III:390-403), and when that

fails he seeks out the King. He does so, even though he is aware of the risks involved:

COQUÍN
Aunque me mates,
habiéndote conocido,
o señor, tengo de hablarte:
escúchame. (III:675-8)

His intervention is inadequate, and ends on a note of bathos, but at least it is motivated by a streak of humanity that Gutierre stifles.(9) For Coquín is moved by a sense of pity for the afflicted, and this pity makes him see the King as he should be, were he truly King:

COQUÍN
Yo, enternecido de ver
una infelice mujer,
perseguida de su estrella,
vengo, señor, a avisarte
que tu brazo altivo y fuerte
hoy la libre de la muerte. (III:711-16)

The pity is expressed in tears; fellow feeling finds its expression in laughter, too, in the laughter that was Coquín's former weapon against the inhumanity of the world around him:

COQUÍN
de veras vengo a hablar;
que quiero hacerte llorar
ya que no puedo reír. (III:687-9)

So Coquín may be fully human in a way the others are not, and in his humanity we catch perhaps a glimpse of true nobility:(10)

COQUÍN
Ésta es una honrada acción
de hombre bien nacido, en fin... (III:680-1)

But that deserves a thesis in itself; and this one is ended.

NOTES

(1) To a probably less dependable extent, he could also count on some memories of the source-play.

(2) There is an interesting similarity between the worlds of the protagonists of honour plays and the creations of Kafka. Barbara K. Mújica explores it in Calderón's don Lope de Almeida: a Kafkian character (New York, 1971).

(3) At this point, it seems appropriate to recall Parker's words: "The fact that every single human action is a stone cast onto the water of social life, producing ripples that eddy out into unforeseeable consequences, makes it the duty of each man to look outwards towards other men, and not inwards towards himself. Self-centredness, the self-assertive construction of a private world of one's own, is, for Calderón, the root of moral evil. In his drama, the individual cannot see beyond his restricted range of vision; yet with a confidence born of self-centredness, he deludes himself into the belief that his vision is complete and aims at what seems a clear goal, only to blunder into something unforeseen". (A.A. Parker, 'Towards a Definition of Calderonian Tragedy', BHS 39 (1962), p. 233). Parker's profound perceptions are almost perfectly exemplified here.

(4) Neuschäfer has noted this in Calderón's treatment of honour in this play: "precisamente el valor que debería garantizar al hombre orden y moral, sustancia ética y dignidad, se convierte en su perdición y le degrada a la categoría de ser sin libertad" (Hans-Jorg Neuschäfer, "El triste drama de honor", Hacia Calderón: Segundo coloquio anglo-germano (Hamburg, 1970), p. 100.

(5) "El hecho de que en El médico de su honra falte o se silencie la posibilidad de apelar a la gracia divina acentúa...la tristeza hasta el extremo de lo que es posible en un drama cristiano" (Neuschäfer, art. cit., p. 101). Similar conclusions are also reached - though from a very different approach - by A.K. G. Paterson in his sensitive and moving study of El pintor de su deshonra: 'The Comic and Tragic Melancholy of Juan Roca', FMLS 5 (1969), pp. 244-61.

Neuschäfer also underlines the fact that the characters in El médico de su honra appear trapped in a series of vicious circles from which they cannot escape. It is worth noting that A.A. Parker points out a similar desperate circularity in the Devil, trapped "in the closed circle of self" in Calderón's No hay más fortuna que Dios. See the introduction to his edition (Manchester, 1962), p. xxviii. There are some interesting connections here it would be worthwhile pursuing.

(6) The play is clearly the product of a society that is no longer adequately functioning. I suspect this may be one reason for its continuing appeal now, in a similar age of disenchantment.

(7) So when Quevedo wished to make Pablos' descent as degrading as possible, he gave him a barber for a father. See his Buscón, ed. cit., pp. 16, 23.

This particular aspect of Gutierre's degradation has been beautifully studied by D. Cruickshank in 'The Metaphorical Crypto-Judaism of Calderón's Gutierre', BHS 59 (1982), pp. 33-41. There are touches of it earlier in the play; the niceties of honourable obligation become reduced in Gutierre's mouth to commercial exchanges (I: 509-11, 846-8).

(8) Calderón makes it very clear that Gutierre is prepared to go to almost any lengths in his ruthless attempt to keep up appearances (III:558-85).

(9) A.A. Parker has already drawn attention to his aspect of Coquín's character: "The other Calderonian tragedy with a court buffoon is La cisma de Ingalaterra: here Pasquín is the only wise man in the play, as Coquín is the only human one in this" ('El médico de su honra as tragedy', Hispanófila 1 (1974), p. 21, n. 19).

(10) There is a touch of this in Catalinón, too; see Tirso de Molina, El burlador de Sevilla, ed. cit., I:879-80.

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Abbreviations used

BAE	Biblioteca de Autores Espanoles, Madrid.
BCom	Bulletin of the Comediantes.
BH	Bulletin Hispanique.
BHS	Bulletin of Hispanic Studies.
Clas. Cast.	Clásicos Castellanos.
Comedias	The Comedias of Calderón: a facsimile edition prepared by D. W. Cruickshank and J. E. Varey with textual and critical studies, 19 vols, London, 1973.
FMLS	Forum for Modern Language Studies.
HR	Hispanic Review.
MLN	Modern Language Notes.
MLR	Modern Language Review.
OC I, II	Pedro Calderón de la Barca, Obras Completas, ed. A. Valbuena Briones, vol. I: Dramas, 5th edition, Madrid, 1966; vol. II: Comedias, 2nd edition, Madrid, 1960.
Rev. Hisp.	Revue Hispanique.
RF	Romanische Forschungen.
RJ	Romanistisches Jahrbuch.

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